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Shri Annasaheb Patwardhan

*To the blessed memory of my Master  
at whose holy feet  
I happened to learn these things !*

— Aprabuddha



## PREFACE

Through the Infinite Grace of my Master I am able today to present this book to the public. It is a faithful rendering of my Marathi book, "मरात्हा संस्कृत वेदान्तानुसारी वैदिक विज्ञानाचा विवरण", published twenty-five years ago, which was written as a criticism in general and a critique of the Vedic section of the Maharashtra Encyclopaedia in particular. As the same ideologies are prevalent all over the world, even today, the need for such an attempt is strongly felt; and as I am moving fast towards the end of my life (now I am seventy-seven) I was constrained to undertake this publication, though not prepared for it.

The subject is naturally divided into three parts. The first deals with what is called 'the Historical method' and tries to show, not only that it is not scientific but that it is a confused mass of prejudices and conjectures. In the second part, I have shown how, even according to the so-called historical method, the results arrived at, until now, are illogical, imaginary and misleading. With the line of thought followed by Western Orientalists themselves, I have shown how the science of 'History' needs to be overhauled, at least in the field of Vedic culture. The third part describes the spectacle which is likely to be seen if one gets rid of one's intellectual slavery and thinks independently.

My proposition is that, like all human knowledge, man's culture is characterised by two stages viz. induction and deduction. A culture can be said to have attained perfection only when it reaches the Deductive stage. This fact is never taken into account in the comparative study of cultures, simply because no attempt has been until now made to define culture logically. I have, therefore, tried to do so before proceeding to the subject and to formulate the criterion for judging the comparative value

of cultures and understanding them properly. As aptly pointed out by Aldous Huxley, man may not be aware of it, but his behaviour is regulated by his ideas about the Universe in which he is born, in which he has to work and in which he must cease to work. Cosmology, therefore, constitutes an important element in his life. However advanced his resources, man's mundane life is restricted to the five-fold experiences provided by his five senses. There is no significant addition to it, however he may amplify his resources. In other words the value of the physical experiences always remains the same—let us say one. Such is not the case with his cosmological and philosophical ideas and experiences. In his earliest stage they not only amount to nothing, but are fantastic and illusive. It may be said, in mathematical parlance, that the value of each is then minus one. By and by, he begins to have right ideas, and develops speculative sciences such as metaphysics, psychology, epistemology, astronomy, geology, and, with their help, makes his temporal existence happy and prosperous. But, as long as they do not reach such a stage as to be in conformity with one another and as long as his life is not integrated with their confirmed mode, their value is next to nothing (say any fraction of one). When they are sufficiently developed so as to integrate human life with their harmonised pattern then alone they can be said to have attained perfection, say the value of one. All subsequent development is then deductible from them and the culture then becomes Deductive. According to this criterion even the so-called modern, advanced, scientific culture, which aims at colonising other planets, is still in the stage of induction and hence imperfect. What is known as Vedic Culture can alone lay claim to the Deductive stage.

I am perfectly aware of the defects of the publication. The quotations from the Veda are not marked with the signs of svaras, and in many places the English translation of the quotations either from the

Veda or literature has not been given. There are several references to the History of Maharashtra and to the events and incidents in it. As readers of this book would naturally be unfamiliar with them, they ought to have been fully explained. I have not done so, for the simple reason that it would have swelled the volume and made even the publication impossible.

I have, however, taken care to bring them in such a manner as not to come in the way of understanding the subject. The reader can easily follow the line of thought even without going into them; for they are not cited as authorities but are used for adducing additional evidence. The original work was an open criticism, mainly on an important Marathi publication. It was, therefore, but natural that quotations and instances familiar to the Marathi reader should come in every now and then. I have not replaced them, by similar instances, familiar to the English reader. Care is however taken to leave out many of them and retain only such as were expressly necessary. All these references are such as are normally experienced by the people of any country and I think there should be no difficulty in understanding the force of my argument. It is equally so with quotations. Their purport is generally given in the course of discussion and it is only this which the reader wants to know. Experts and scholars will not, however, find it difficult to understand them. I however crave the indulgence of my readers for all these shortcomings.

There is also another serious drawback for which I must apologise. I was not able to cite the pages or the editions of the books from which references and quotations have been taken, though I am deeply indebted to all their authors. An unfortunate calamity robbed me of my records and notes three years ago and I am now too old to cite them from memory.

I owe an immense debt of gratitude to all who have been helpful to me in various ways. I have freely availed myself of many writers. They are all my gurus,

even those whom I had to criticise mercilessly. I do not harbour the slightest disregard for any of them. I fully appreciate the value of the help I have received from their labours and seek their indulgence for whatever might seem unpleasant to them. The need for the service of science is imperative and I had to be so frank and outspoken.

I also owe an apology to the University of Poona for the delay in printing this book. They sanctioned a grant of Rs 750/- for the publication of this book and even paid an instalment according to the rules. The book ought to have been published seven years ago. But, my financial circumstances would not allow me to do so and the publication was delayed\*. I sincerely thank them for their help and their patience.

This translation is solely due to the zeal of Prof. D. K. Garde, D. Litt., of the Poona University. But, for his love's labour this book might never have seen the light of the world. I am glad to mention also the name of my friend Shri Bhausahel Cholkar, retired Head Master, Kalyan, who took great pains in going through the manuscript and making important suggestions.

That this book is before the public in such a neat and decent form is solely due to the unceasing attention paid to its printing and get-up by Shri P. N. Banhatti and his son Shri M. P. Banhatti, the proprietors of the Narayan Mudranalaya, Nagpur, and to Shri M. B. Chipalkatti, Sub-editor, Hitawada, Nagpur, who so willingly undertook the tiresome task of proof correction and accomplished it, so successfully, as not to leave a single important error in the printing.

\* After the receipt of the first instalment the printing of the book had been commenced I owe an immense debt of gratitude to Shri Narsimhdas Mor of Nagpur, the late Bajnath Dhandhania of Nagpur, Shri Laxmi Narayan of Malani and Shri Ghanashyam Potdar of Bombay who so kindly advanced money for the purpose. But, owing to the mishap mentioned above the printed forms were lost and the printing had to be begun anew which caused the delay.

I do not know how I can express my gratitude to Shri N. S. Deshmukh who so graciously offered all financial help in memory of his worthy father, the late Shamrao Deshmukh of Kelwad. Rather than try to acquit myself by means of words I should prefer to remain, for ever, in the debt of all these benefactors.

*'Aprabuddha'*

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Late Shamrao Bapu Deshmukh  
of Kelwad, (Dt Nagpur)



# **Message of Rgveda**



## ONE

### WHAT IS CULTURE ?

If there is anything most injurious in this world it is ignorance. But of all types of ignorances the most harmful is the ignorance about oneself. The very expression, "ignorance about oneself" may appear contradictory at first sight but on a moment's reflection it will be seen that it has a deep meaning. It is a matter of common experience that one cannot see one's own eyes through which one sees the whole world. Even so is the case with all sense-organs and so long as man has no other source of knowledge than the sense organs and has no other means to accumulate that knowledge besides the intellect which, too, is fed on such knowledge, it is inevitable that man should be more or less ignorant about himself. The main reason for this is that by the time man reaches a stage at which he can independently think of the world, all his faculties, including the intellect, have already been moulded, at any rate influenced, by several factors. And, howsoever, he may boast of independent thinking, it is subject to such a mould and is, therefore, dependent on it to that extent. This independent (!) intellect cannot, therefore, go very far in its operation and is at least unconsciously determined by these secret influences.

At present—thanks to the education which has been dealt out to some of the preceding generations—the working of the intellect and other faculties of the present generation has been determined by that education. Those who were responsible for that kind of education were of a different mould, howsoever noble the motives that

might have actuated them, and they had not even a little definite knowledge as such about our nation and its culture. It is, therefore, no wonder that even their honest surmises about our culture have been proved to be not only mistaken but mischievous and disastrous. The technique of their education, the methodology of their research and the socalled science of history which they built up on such a dubious foundation, have patently been misguided and misleading Authors like Michael Pym have borne this out when they said "India from the inside is so different from India seen superficially," or "to understand India one must live India, be India, then try to estimate values not in terms of Western 'progress', Western 'desires', and ideals, but in terms of concrete results" (Power of India) This only means that several sincere Occidental scholars have begun to make a confession, not only that their study of India has radically been wrong but also that their very method of making this study was ill-devised

When the indigenous springs of national education plentifully welling up in several homes and nourishing the national genius dried up on account of our too much dependence on European education, the following generations were turned out through a defective educational machinery as stated above The result has been that although we are born in India, live in India and have been brought up in it, we have such foreign hearts in us that we are hardly able to experience and realize, even for ourselves, what it is to "live India" to use the words of Michael Pym. It is, therefore, increasingly very difficult to understand that there are two aspects to the inner life of India, the internal and the external There are, no doubt, volumes written on Indian History, Indian Culture and Indian Society, but their authors, despite the elaborate manifestation of their intellect, are only seen to reproduce revised and enlarged editions of the pet notions of their Western masters If this is the condition of even learned savants, the less said about the raw ill-baked youth the

better. Add to it the extremely fascinating and emotionally coloured (but economically paying) literature which has taken things from bad to worse. In these circumstances, I intend to make an effort in this book to impress on my young friends that there is some such independent entity as our culture which, therefore, deserves to be studied independently, the rules and principles for the study of which have also to be independently laid down by persons who have lived India and have clearly seen both the internal and external aspects of the inner life of India and have also felt the pulse of Western culture. The very word *Samskṛti* (culture) is enough to create some initial confusion in the average mind. It is very difficult to state with exactitude what this word conveys, despite the fact that it is profusely employed in every walk of life, in season and out of season. Although the word has been variously elucidated it is really to be doubted whether a scientific definition of this word has ever been given either in any Indian or in any of the languages of the world. So far as Marathi readers are concerned the definition given by the Editor of the *Mahārāṣṭra Encyclopaedia* is tacitly taken for granted and may even serve a limited purpose in day-to-day life. But it does more harm than good as its omnibus character and glib generality create an impression that it is impossible to have any eternal principles of the basic framework of *Samskṛti* (culture) as such. In fact it creates the mistaken impression that it resembles the eternally changing, flowing current of a river. Because of this major flaw, this definition does not help us in conducting a serious and scientific study of the concept of culture. Let us, therefore, at the very outset, consider whether the word *Samskṛti* (culture) can be logically defined on the basis of some immutable principles.

Although the word *Samskṛti* (culture) is of purely Samskṛt origin, yet, it has not been used in older Samskṛt literature in this modern sense. The reason seems to be that the present comparative study of various national cultures resulting from the contacts and relations among

various nations has necessitated its liberal use in this new sense. The Aryas of India knew only one *Samskrti* (culture) and that was the Vedic *Samskrti*. It was their experience that the progress in other countries had not come to a stage deserving to be indicated by this word. There was no occasion for further discussion of this expression, for, they had an unshaken faith in their own ability to lead the world as indicated by expressions like श्रवणो श्रावणः (rendering the whole world Arya) or य य चित्रं सिद्धेण् गिर्यानि पापाः (that others may learn lessons in the building of character from their practical example). It does not, however, mean that the present import of the term had escaped the notice of the ancient Aryas and the very word *Samskrti* though recently coined, is etymologically cent per cent *Samskrt* and genuinely ours, but, though the word is pure, its current use has unfortunately ignored its real import which has to be revived in the light of cognate words like *Samskāra* in the same language.

It is an accredited principle that in the discussion on the meaning even of a common word the dictionary does not go far enough. It barely mentions synonyms which have nearly the same meaning. In fact, it is the subtle distinctions between their meanings which have occasioned them. In determining, therefore, the exact import of a word we have to consider the genius and the psychology of the people speaking the language. Even in the Vedic lexicon of St Petersberg, (so respectfully upheld by the Editor of the *Mahārāstra Encyclopaedia*) the attempt of the editors to justify their own meanings, to the exclusive rejection of Sāyanāchārya's interpretation, has been shown to be patently ridiculous by Goldstucker in his essay on Pāṇini. Even so one has to consider all aspects of the question while considering the exact meaning of the word *Samskrti*. Etymologically this word has two roots, namely (Sam) सम् and शृः Words like *Samskāra* are also made of these very roots. The prefix *Sam* bears two meanings "good" and "synthesized". But of these two the latter seems to be the original meaning from which the former was derived. When the word

"*samskāra*" is used in a religious sense the prefix in it definitely conveys the latter meaning and the other alternatives ( to improve, to enhance the ability, etc ) may be shown to be subsidiary and subordinate. The principal 16 Sacraments are intended to "Synthesize". The idea is to connect the new life with the various transcendental extra-sensory powers in the universe, through the prescribed ritual. The power which such an experiment has of *improving* or *enhancing* the ability of the person concerned is due to this synthesizing. In order to prove my interpretation it is necessary to consider what the general 'Vaidik' point of view was with regard to every thing in this world.

Generally speaking there are two currents of thought among thinkers of the world. Proceeding a step further it may be asserted that, the whole mankind which boasts of its rationality is divided into these two classes. This may be shown with an everyday example Persons who set out on a journey have often to put up in an unfamiliar place and sojourn there for the night. Some of them would just spread their bed wherever they happen to sit and start snoring within a few seconds. But, there are others who can never do so under any circumstances despite their fatigue at the end of a long journey. They would assiduously get up, arrange for a lamp, at any rate strike a match to survey the space 'around, assure themselves of the safety of the surroundings, prefer a suitable corner and sweep it clean, if possible, before they can have sound sleep Scientifically speaking these two tendencies may be termed "superficial" and "radical." The elucidation of the "divine" देवी and "demoniacal wealth" अनुरा, in the XVI Chapter of the Gita, is based on this distinction Even today, the tumultuous war seen all over the world of thought may ultimately be traced to a conflict between these two tendencies.

The "superficial" way of thinking may serve a practical purpose. We may not realize its insufficiency or defective character when we lose sight of higher truths in happy surroundings and yet the fact remains, and has

been often borne out by human experience that, such a way of thinking does not suffice even partially to give contentment even to the average mind, not to speak of the more inquiring ones. The intelligent man cannot carry on his routine activities unless he has considered their various aspects. How is it possible then for the human intellect to rest contented in an all-important matter like human culture unless it has probed far and deep into the why and wherefore of things ? It is a matter of common experience, that, in our day-to-day life we have to take decisions which involve conflicts between good and evil which in their turn cannot be decided without the background of our cosmology, as pointed out by Paul Carus and Aldous Huxley. It is impossible to doubt the intellectual flourishes of the Vedic people. How could such eminently intellectual thinkers rest contented by a mere superficial line of thought in deciding their activities ? We have, therefore, perforce to take into account the radical way of thinking, of the 'Vedic' people in our study of the word "samskr̄ti".

Shri Śankarāchārya's commentary on the Brahma-Sūtras makes one thing clear. It is that the starting point of man's thought must be "*his own self*". Nothing else, even the rest of the whole universe, can ever be the starting point of his inquiry. The whole universe has a significance for him because of himself. If I do not exist the very question whether the world exists or not cannot arise. Even if we take the conclusions of modern science that man has evolved from lower creatures, the real beginning of his evolution can be traced back to the stage when he started thinking of the individual in himself and particularly about the "I" within that individual. As soon as he started thinking about this "I" a trinity arose before him. What is this "I" ? How is this "I" related to the external world ? And, finally, what is the nature of this external world ? If we go back right up to the stage where human history can be found it is impossible to come across society in any stage which has no notion whatsoever of these three things. In the very

life of human society, from the early beginnings to the present day, we discover a continuous braiding as it were, of these three threads. The human being whether of the early uncivilized savage stage, or of the ultramodern mechanized stage, has always had some notion or the other of these three things. The beads of the various aspects of his life are threaded on this basic notion, whether he consciously thinks of them or not. It is not claimed here that every individual has minutely thought of it or consciously planned his life according to it, nor is it asserted, that, the very early notions about these things remain unchanged from the beginning to the end of his life. Man's real existance is moulded by three forces, namely, thinking, feeling and willing. These notions do and have to undergo changes as these three forces expand in their scope. But whatever the changes, they are not altogether independent of, but are rather canalized by these three forces and there is a continuity in this current as well, just like that of the main current of a river which remains the same despite changes in seasons and differences in the bed of the river. There is a current of human thought, sentiment, and action, eternal, fundamental and immutable, which persists despite superficial transitions. This fundamental current may be termed the *Samskrti* of that society or the people of the nation. The individual may be passing through routine life, he may be discharging his day to day responsibilities, he may not have previously thought of the minor details of life, and yet his faith unconsciously dominates all his external activities and determines his behaviour even to the minute extent. Though, he realizes his momentary character of life on occasions like accidents or atrocities, he continues his activities as if he were quite unconcerned and unaffected. This fundamental faith he has acquired through habit and he does not consider it necessary to think about it. Even so is the case with one's own self, the universe and the

world of practical affairs. It is not pertinent whether a person has acquired this faith by his own effort or borrowed it ready-made from others, whether he is conscious of it or is unconsciously influenced by it. The point to remember is that, there is some fundamental faith with regard to the above three things in his mind and whatever the transitions his life may undergo, the texture of his behaviour is woven, as it were, around his faith with these three things.

It is obvious that man consciously or unconsciously strives after happiness whether material or psychological. But he is not content with merely getting the desired share of happiness. He craves in addition that it should continue for ever. Even an atheist or a savage desires that he should live as long as possible and should have an unbroken continuity of pleasurable experiences. Naturally, at least for the satisfaction of this desire he has to think beyond himself and his routine life and cherish some notion of the external world. Barring notable exceptions, we can hardly find a person whose power of thought has never been affected by two major phenomena namely, sleep and death. Even a man who boasts of his rationality is overpowered by sleep over which he has no control and while under its influence he is totally indifferent to the experiences of this world. There is hardly a human being who would not wonder at this phenomenon. Even so is the case with death. Man not only strives for material wealth but also nourishes tender and delicate sentiments like love and cherishes spiritual values such as glory, self-respect. But he is forced (at times in the midst of his feverish activities) to abandon the fight and to pass into nothingness. Is this phenomenon not sufficiently disquieting to spur the curiosity of the thinking mind? Who can forget the following pathetic two lines from Mrs Hemans—

“Alas for Love! If Thou wert all  
Oh earth! And nothing beyond”

Is there a man who has not been touched by the melting pathos in these lines? In every walk of life man is confronted with the problem of the morrow and is

required to go beyond the work-a-day world and to think in more comprehensive terms. It is here that philosophy has its birth. It is impossible for anyone to state with precision when such a stage first arose in human history. As already pointed out it is customary for man to operate on the accumulated capital of the heritage of the past and, whatever his boast of originality and rationality, his very power of thinking is limited by his debt to the past. He now draws ready conclusions from the universal premises of the past and now tries to build up a new generalisation from the accumulated observations of his own. There are thus two trends in cultural development : 'the inductive' and 'the deductive', although, every culture, worth the name, cannot exclusively be either and must needs share some proportion of both those trends.

Once the human intellect reaches a philosophical height—whatever the value of that philosophy—wherein he thinks of the soul and the universe, he does arrive at certain general notions which influence in a large measure the whole plan of his life. From the Vedānt Philosophy which may be said to have reached the utmost heights of knowledge down to the materialist school of thought like Bolshevism there is some sort of philosophy at the base of every line of thought Man's life and thought have thus dovetailed together ever since the beginning of known human history. In his day-to-day life man faces phenomena some of which are under his control while others like death are beyond him. Though they do pertain to the external world he need not dive into metaphysical depths and try to know the whole world for the limited purpose of carrying on his day-to-day activities. It is for the sake of philosophy that he has to think of the universe as a whole. While the scientist tries to understand the mechanism of the working of the world the philosopher tries to understand the nature of the universe. The average man is forced by latent ambitions, unrequited love, unfulfilled desires and unsatisfied sentiments to look beyond death and does at some moment, at any rate, realise that there is (or at least may be)

life beyond death When he realises such a possibility he naturally wishes so to behave in this life as to fare safely in the world after death. This is where the ear is influenced by the heart.

To provide for the future is characteristic of human intellect Prof Chhatre, the celebrated mathematician of Deccan College, Poona, was reputed to be extremely erudite and atheistic by temperament But he had to concede such a possibility and provide for the ultimate future A story is told that when he was putting up with his favourite pupil, Shri Annasaheb Patwardhan in Bombay he was found to be muttering something before going to bed Asked what he was doing, he had to confess that he was citing the hymn *Vishnu Sahasra Nāma* (the hymn containing the thousand names of Vishnu) "Do you then believe in God ?" asked the favourite pupil The Professor gravely replied, "I have had no time, my dear, in my life to investigate whether there is anything beyond, nor do I expect to find time to do it I have, however, thought of providing for the alternatives If there is nothing beyond and what I call 'I' is to return after death to the dust that it was, the ten minutes which I spend per day need not be accounted for, for, I am the master of my life and might as well spend them in smoking or chanting a hymn But suppose there is something beyond, what I do in these ten minutes might help later. If, however, I were to presume unauthorisedly that there is nothing beyond and make no provision for its possibility it would certainly have wasted my life It is for this reason that I scrupulously spare the negligible ten minutes for this practice "

The lesson is not far to seek It ought to be an eye-opener to those who call themselves practical men Even those who pose to be atheists must realise the responsibility for making such a statement without having thoroughly investigated the problem The weight of traditional evidence is on the other side The firsthand evidence of mystics and seers and the admonitions of saints and philosophers certainly caution us the other way On

the contrary not a single atheist or physical scientist has yet come forward to assert (nor is there any possibility of such an assertion) that he verified by experiment on himself that there is nothing beyond death.

If the average man ignorant of what lies beyond, feels it necessary to find out something about it by dint of his intellect, it follows, *a fortiori* that one who has a living faith in the existence of life after death, will necessarily attempt exhaustively to investigate this problem. There are generally three aspects of this quest. In the first instance he tries to obtain all possible knowledge about the universe so as to convert this knowledge into power in the scientific sense and to make his every day life as comfortable as possible. Secondly, he tries to study minutely, though piecemeal, the illimitable universe which lies beyond the span of his limited life and the reach of his ten sense-organs. Thirdly, he also tries to think out what is ultimately going to happen to his own self and to the external world around him and to what he has been doing in it. He naturally desires to find out what his role in the whole picture is going to be.

We may, therefore, attempt a scientific definition of culture as follows —

$$\text{Culture} = \frac{\text{Philosophy + Cosmological concepts}}{\text{Mundane life}}$$

This would perhaps enable us to understand why there is disparity in the cultures of different human groups irrespective of their high intellectual development and material achievements. This would also show the method of studying exhaustively the culture of any human group. The above equation would make it clear, that, the cultures of different human groups widely differ because of the differences in the value of the elements of the numerator and denominator. The above definition also furnishes the criteria of the perfection of the culture.

Let us apply this to different human groups. At a stage when human society was in its initial stages of development man had no ideas of either philosophy or cosmology. Or if he had any, the ideas were very

crude and incoherent. In this stage the elements of the numerator have a negative value while the denominator has comparatively a greater one. The culture of an early human group can, therefore, be shown as follows —

—Philosophy + (Cosmology)  
—Lokayātrā (mundane life)

In other words there was complete incoherence among the three factors. As the culture of the human groups advanced the numerator naturally expanded but the denominator did not keep pace with it and so there was no harmony between the numerator and the denominator. All the three advanced as if divorced from one another. This is the stage even of the present western scientific culture and, therefore, it may safely be asserted that even this culture, is imperfect and in the stage of 'induction'. Only when the results of these three factors agree with one another the culture reaches the 'deductive' stage and may be said perfect. For, in all further development there is harmony between the three factors.

According to available history the Vedic culture is the only culture which has satisfied this test. It has weathered the storms of transitions and circumstances. Where Greece and Rome have gone India persists with all the essentials of her ancient culture. It also bids well to weather the impending storm of the materialistic misinterpretation of human life. A few years ago Michael Pym, an American authoress has propounded this very thesis in her remarkable work "The Power of India" which bears evidence alike of her independence of judgment and minute study of Indian conditions. Cultures which failed to reach the deductive stage have all died or are in a miserably moribund condition and those which are for the moment climbing the pinnacle of glory are also showing signs of committing suicide on account of tormenting discontent. Despite their material progress and life of comfort they are made up of inferior stuff and bear the impress of ill make-up because, they do not

possess a really advanced and definite cosmology and are not, therefore, able to reconcile the seemingly advanced philosophy with the inconsistencies of the seemingly advanced mundane life. Nor have they had at any time the idea, that, the relation between philosophy and cosmology on the one hand and the wisdom of mundane life on the other is really that of the numerator and denominator.

We have been using the expression 'cosmology' in the above discussion. But, what is its exact import? Are there any definite means to ascertain such import? What are the criteria of advanced cosmology, or is it to be left open to each individual to boast of his advanced cosmological concepts? Before we proceed further with any discussion it is necessary to answer these questions.

In my opinion the test of advanced or perfect cosmology is that it should not be antagonistic to, but should be capable of being perfectly reconciled with the philosophical concepts of the group. It should be possible for philosophy and cosmology to enlighten and elucidate each other. Occidental scholars even in their insolent attitude have to accept willy-nilly that among the schools of philosophy obtaining at present 'Vedic' Philosophy is perfect or at least most advanced. The so-called philosophies of past societies or those of the present Occidental societies are admittedly imperfect. But the thing of real importance is that their cosmological concepts are still more imperfect. They cannot be borne out by their defective philosophy. Several religious sects had to bind their doctrines down to certain texts and to make them sacrosanct because they were diffident whether those texts would at all stand the searching scrutiny of science. This is the reason why there is a general anti-religious revolt in the modern mind, culminating in the communist ideology which bids well to replace religion altogether. Finding their religious philosophies inadequate, both to satisfy the intellect and to feed

the heart, several ideologies rooted in materialism have come to influence the modern mind and are attempting to prove that there is no need for any cosmological concepts for the conduct of human life.

Whatever the measure of success which these ideologies achieve, and whatever their future or the future of the religions they attack, one thing is certain, that culture alone is perfect which contains a philosophy capable of satisfying most highly developed reason, which has a cosmology not conflicting with but perfectly reconciling a highly advanced science with the above two. I take this as a perfectly scientific definition of culture and so long as it is not shown to be positively defective I shall try to show in the light of this definition the real character of 'Vedik' culture, the dangerous implications of other cultures despite their certain attractive aspects and the futility of the endless intellectual labours of Occidental savants due to the ignorance of the above concept of culture. I shall also attempt to show how, in spite of superficial changes, we still belong to the original Vedic culture.

## TWO

### THE SCIENCE OF RESEARCH ( INTRODUCTION )

We have seen in the last chapter how the word "Samskr̄ti" is to be defined, if a definition is to be offered at all Let us now see how the labours of Occidental scholars have largely been wasted for want of such a definition, how the fundamental canons of their research, and the research work done on their basis, have mostly been misled and how it has further been responsible for spreading ignorance, if not misunderstanding, about Vedic culture. This will help us to understand the nature of Vedic culture and its evolution resulting from research work done on the right lines based on our definition

The working of the human intellect is never one-sided It comprises two processes, the deductive and the inductive It never happens that man at any place is found merely in the inductive or exclusively in the deductive process It is, however, possible to determine the stage of his progress from the relationship between the two Once the activities of man follow some fixed principles they belong to the deductive process, in spite of inductive currents here and there. Until his knowledge reaches such a synthetic and deductive stage he is yet on the inductive road in spite of some of his doings seeming deductive What is true of the individual is true of the nation, though only on a larger scale. When all the activities of a community

or nation take a synthetic turn they indicate that it has reached the deductive stage and this synthetic character once reached never disappears despite critical transitions in external affairs. A culture which has reached such a deductive stage can alone be called a perfect culture. Throughout the history of the Vedic culture, right from the earliest stage, namely, that of the „Rgveda, right up to modern times, it can be shown that there is an unmistakable unison underlying it, in spite of the remarkable changes in its externalia. On the contrary all other nations including the prosperous ones in modern times, bear testimony to a great inconsistency and divergence in all their external activities—if we leave alone their political policies—and appear like the scattered beads of a broken necklace in spite of all the developments of science and attainment of material prosperity and luxury. It is barely to maintain their political existence, that their practical genious has retained a certain amount of unison in their affairs. This is so patent as to be obvious to anyone taking a bird's-eye view of human society. This fundamental difference between the Vedic and other cultuies should, in fact, be borne in mind in a comparative study of cultures. But, it is unfortunately neglected.

It is obvious that this radical error should lead to a succession of errors. How could one answer a question like "How many mangoes could be purchased for ten pice if ten bananas could be had for four pice?" For a rule of three to be applied the two entities must be of the same kind. But, the wonder of wonders is, that all students of Vedic culture whether they are foreign-minded like Dr Ketkar or ardent patriots like the late Lokmanya Tilak or Nanasaheb Pāvgi have been making this fundamental mistake. The reason why even persons like Lokmanya Tilak—let alone the 'mind-borns' like Dr Ketkar—committed this error is, that they never paid attention to the fact, that our historical research must be based on canons founded by ourselves. The science of

research in which they were interested was borrowed by them as it stood and they did their best within its framework. Because of their extraordinary ability they commanded the wonder and admiration of others and even what they achieved would no doubt be a guide to us in founding our new science of research. But, this does not alter the fact, that even their research was characterized by those shortcomings.

If this is the case with our own indigenous research scholars the condition of foreign research scholars could better be imagined than described. Having lost sight of the two stages of culture explained above, they never understood that it was necessary to determine the stage in which extant Samskrta literature—the very basis of all this research—was and this seemingly minor mistake was responsible for a series of blunders in all the research that came in its wake.

Their mistake could be explained as follows. They had their own history before their minds, hence, they naturally concluded that all other peoples must have developed on the same lines as their own ancestors. They, therefore, developed a prejudiced point of view through which they viewed everything connected with the study of Vedic culture. For instance, they took as an axiom that man evolved out of a savage stage by his own effort. The early progenitors of the Vedic culture must also, therefore, have been in a savage stage. Even assuming that man is today in a deductive stage, it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that he must have reached this deductive stage through the path of induction. We have no quarrel with this statement except that it suffers from one handicap. The bulk of Samskrta literature available at present belongs to the deductive stage and hence conclusions cannot be drawn from it by the inductive process. They missed this point and hence cherished a fond prejudice that the history of the Aryan people derivable from the Rgveda onwards, is the history of the fathers of the Vedic culture from an early savage stage. This is the root of all their further mistakes. They supposed

that the picture of society found in the Rgveda represented the savage stage and compared it with the early history of some of the European nations They, therefore, further believed that the whole of human society must at some one stage have been one and homogeneous Only two conclusions could follow from this prejudiced premise Either the early ancestors of all present societies must have been spread all over the globe—like the Europeans today—or else they must have originated from some one original home on the globe and had developed different cultures wherever they went The former of these alternatives was ruled out by their prejudice that this is the picture of a savage society They could not relish (much less execute) the idea of imperial expansion So only the latter alternative was left and even in the application of the latter, India was ruled out from the possible list of original homes, as then imperial prejudice and national pride ("the last infirmity of the noble mind") militates against the idea, leaving the only fantastic alternative that the fathers of the Vedic culture of India must have immigrated from somewhere outside'

But, it was not enough merely to pronounce this conclusion The available Samskr̥t literature had to be pressed into its service The oldest of Samskr̥t works—the Rgveda—could in no case be overlooked and all the Occidental scholars so worked it up as to yield their own conclusions During the last three decades that have followed,\* practically all authors and text-books approved for use in schools and colleges reiterate these very same conclusions, in spite of the fact, that there shortcomings, have, time and again, been proved to the hilt Since, in the very preparatory stage the pliable and docile mind of the peoples is nourished on the misconceptions, they are unable to exercise intellect independently, however they may try to do so The dead weight of their master's wisdom is ever round their neck like the carcass of the albatross round the neck of Coleridge's "Ancient

\* The original Marathi book was published in 1909

Mariner" For instance, to help Vedic scholars, Max-muller has arbitrarily divided the Vedic period into rough epochs Says he, "It will readily be seen how entirely hypothetical all these arguments are.... As an experiment, therefore, though no more than as an experiment, we propose to fix years 600 to 1200 B. C as the limits of that age," (i e. the Sūtra-Age). Goldstucker, the German scholar has asked a very pertinent question on this statement. "But is 1200 B.C. a primary age of the world, except in the Biblical geography?"— This limit of 1200 B C. has willy nilly been pushed back to 6,000 B. C. and no one can positively say, why it could not be pushed back further. Yet, while determining Vedic chronology the typical Occidental scholar finds it extremely difficult—and in fact, against the grain—to go beyond 2,500 B. C. In his obstinacy, he sometimes refuses to accept the conclusions of established natural sciences like Astronomy. The reference to the 'Pāriksitas' in the "Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad", the mention of the Kṛttikas in the Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā, several allusions in Vedic Astronomy and the inferences drawn by the late Lokmanya Tilak with the help of the Vernal equinox in the Orion, are really speaking more solid proofs than any other evidence. Several other pieces of evidence adduced from Philology and such other so-called sciences are comparatively second rate, but, scholars like Winter-nitz attempt to pronounce even the evidence of Astronomy, invalid on the doubtful basis of the socalled science of Philology, to the utter neglect of several important points In one place, for instance, Dr. Winter-nitz argues, against the Orion theory of the late Lokmanya Tilak, that language does necessarily undergo considerable transition after a millennium. If the Vedas be assigned to great antiquity, then, in the range between the Vedic language and the present classical Samskr̤t, the language of Brāhmaṇas alone is not a sufficient link. There is a great flaw in this line of thought It is not an unexceptionable proposition that,



needs rectification Languages derived from Samskr̥t could remain in the field, because, works are written in them Other languages, like the several Prākṛt dialects went out of vogue, as they had not the stabilizing influence of standard works written in them. Literature, whether Vedic or that of the Brāhmaṇas, is after all written literature and does not very much differ from current Samskr̥t. If we were to apply the conclusions of Occidental experience, that language undergoes transition after a millennium, what could prevent the Samskr̥t language from changing in this manner, after the lapse of thousands of years, especially, when popular languages underwent any amount of transition? The answer is not far to seek. Those who cannot imagine that culture can reach a deductive stage cannot also conceive that the language of written works can and does remain unaffected, while popular spoken languages may undergo any amount of transition. It is rather surprising that, though, the imagination of these Occidental scholars plays freely throughout their research, it betrays a characteristic weakness in this particular respect. This is what is responsible for their style of writing which is moulded in a particular way. Goldstucker has nicely described this stereotyped style of Occidental scholars. There is hardly any other unrestrained writer on Vedic culture than Weber. Says Goldstucker about Weber's writing. ". . . . . which treats its readers as if the personal feeling of Professor Weber has all the weight of scientific arguments and deals with one of the most important problems of Samskr̥t literature in such manner, as if it were a matter of table talk..... and here I may, in passing, advert once more to a practice sometimes met with in literary arguments It consists in quietly introducing in the premises some such words—innocent words as 'more' or 'almost' or 'already' or 'so much' or similar adverbs of small size, which have not the slightest claims to any such hospitality and then, suddenly these little interlopers

grow into mastership and sway the discussion into which they have steadily crept . that important secrets may be extracted from this grand discovery \*\* The same may be said more or less about all other Occidental scholars.

It is but natural, that the edifice erected on such irregular foundation should also be haphazard The canons of research, which Occidental scholars framed for themselves are mostly based on some of the following notions : It was not enough to imagine that the early ancestors of the Vedic people immigrated into India from outside It was necessary to find some evidence for it in Indian literature as already pointed out, and they used(!) Rgveda for this purpose. Even this use was possible only because they presumed certain misleading notions as axiomatic truths For instance, the state of Vedic society reflected in the Rgveda, they thought, represented the nomads in a primitive stage They also thought that the people described as *Aryas* in the Rgveda came into India from outside

Even a superficial study of the Rgveda would make it abundantly clear that the culture of the Rgvedic people was not only not primitive, but, was of the highest stage, even according to the definition of culture delineated in the preceding chapter Even if we assume that culture connotes means of comforts and luxuries and the capacity to harness the forces of nature to one's own services, the culture of the Rgvedic people can be shown to be in no way inferior to that of the Greeks and Romans References like कल्याणी जाया सुरण गृहे ते । (*Kalyāṇī jāya suranam grhe te*) or जायेदस्तम् (*jāyedastam*) are abundant To say, that, references like these allude to nomadic life is to infer, from a half-naked beggar woman, asking for alms on the Back Bay beach in Bombay, that the whole of the population of Bombay consists of beggars The Occidentals have neither clearly defined culture, nor have they adumbrated the criteria by which to evaluate the culture

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\* Goldstucker's Pānini

If in an archaeological investigation one comes across a piece of copper, side by side with weapons made of bones, one can draw only two conclusions. First, that although these two objects were unearthed at one spot they must originally have been deposited at different stages in history, or, if they must belong to the same period, it only indicates that human society at that stage—at any rate some human beings—must have been using copper in their daily life. It is perfectly logical to draw such a conclusion. the same rule should be applied to several pieces of evidence found in the vast body of literature. What is important is not the *number* of references of a particular type found in literature but the *quality* of those references. Literature bears the impress of society at some past stage and at any particular stage, there are several strata of persons who have evolved up to certain stages. Even in present day Europe there are people of all stages of development from those who understand Einstein's theory of relativity to those who shudder to dine at a table with twelve others for fear of some disaster overtaking them. Can we therefore, safely conclude, that, present-day European literature is the cult of the mediaeval superstitious people? On the contrary, although persons who really believe in Einstein's theory of relativity may be only a handful in number it can be rightly said, that present-day Europe has advanced up to the stage of 'relativism'. Even Occidental scholars will have no quarrel with such a conclusion. But the canons applied to Rgvedic investigation by these very Occidental scholars are an exact contradictions to this, that is to say, they never care to see how qualitatively important a particular reference is, but, rush to judge the stage of Rgvedic culture merely on the basis of the numbers of allusions of a particular type.

The Rgveda abounds in descriptions of weddings, households, cities, forts and ramparts. Even from the various types of sacrifices performed by the Vedic people and from the elaborate development of the institution of sacrifice evinced by the Rgveda, it can be safely

concluded that, it could not be the achievement of a people in the mere nomadic stage. The expansion of the institution of sacrifices and intentional purchase of *Soma* for the purpose of *Yajña* are by themselves sufficient indications of a stabilized society. Add to them the political institutions, the laws and regulations, notion of merit and sin, various types of mineral wealth, the use of metal coins, gold ornaments, clothes, utensils, and several other articles and it will lead only to one conclusion, namely, that those who pronounce such people to be nomadic are either under the influence of deep slumber or (which is worse) are pretending to be ignorant.

The notion that the Rgvedic people were ignorant savages, worshipping inanimate natural phenomena, is similarly misleading and rooted in ignorance. It is true that they worshipped natural phenomena but it was not through ignorance. Such a worship was consistent with, and justified by their philosophy and cosmology. Let alone the Rgvedic people. Even we, today, are in a way nature worshippers. Can anyone, therefore, conclude that our present-day culture is also primitive? If in spite of our nature-worship our culture can belong to a very high stage, what can come in the way of the Rgvedic people respecting nature and yet belonging to a very high state of culture?

Whatever the transitions which seem to have taken place in the body of the Vedic religion, so long as their philosophy and cosmology are unchanged these transitions are like the recurring decimals obtained after deducting the denominator from the numerator.\* Whatever the number of such recurring decimals they need not affect the number. In fact they represent one and the same sum. To worship nature consistently with these cosmological concepts is perfectly consistent with the high stage of cultural attainments, not in the sense in which Occidental scholars take it, but, in that in which Occidental natural scientists worship nature even today. There

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\* Vide the discussion on Sanskrit in the preceding Chapter.

is nothing derogatory in such an action Rhys Davis' "Buddhist India" is a typical instance in point. The Bodhi tree in particular and the *peepul* tree in general are consecrated to Buddhist worship and therefore, command very great reverence among Buddhists, but, no one can, therefore, conclude, that the Buddhists worshipped natural objects. And yet, this celebrated author has made a heroic attempt to justify this instance of tree worship. The burden of the argument is that "What we have here, then, is reverence paid to the tree, not for its own sake, and not to any soul or spirit supposed to be in it, but, to the tree either as the symbol of the master or because it was under a tree of that kind that his followers believed that the venerated teacher of old had become Buddha." (Buddhist India, p. 230 )

Similar metaphorical implications of Vedic forms of worship are given in the Brâhma Works. Apart from these, the descriptions of Vedic deities are so distinctly clear as to show, that they were different from the natural objects associated with them. Even to this day, we conduct these forms of worship, but, this is far from the animism contemptuously so named by European scholars. According to our philosophy the whole structure of the universe is made up of three forms of strata, varying in density, namely, *Ādhyātmika* (spiritual), *Ādhidaivika* (cosmological) and *Ādhibautika* (physical). Our philosophy does not merely halt here, but, it has developed a science which enables us to verify in our experience the existence of all three strata by actual experiment. Hundreds of great souls who have directly visualized and personally experienced the truth of tradition, have not only flourished in the past, but, persist even at present and people who have indirectly experienced it are present in all parts of the world. Unless a critic has positively attempted to verify the truths of *Yoga Sâstra* by positive experiments in his own life, an adverse criticism of it cannot be valued at more than mere ineffective chatter, however learned the author.

Even from the Rgveda it can be proved that, behind the physical or material world (*ādhi-bhautika*) there is another stratum of cosmological reality (*ādhi-darwika*) and both of them have their place in the metaphysical concepts. It is, therefore, sheer obstinacy to characterize as primitive or animistic those people who had advanced up to this stage and based their traditions on its foundation. Attempts to prove from the Rgveda that the Aryans immigrated to India from outside, that they were the only advanced race in the world and that India as they found her was populated by barbarian tribes have miserably failed. This is patent even from the statements made in the Marathi Encyclopaedia by a Western-type savant like Dr. Ketkar who was miserably ignorant about his own country. Many have now begun to accept that India at the advent of the Aryans was inhabited by some people of a fairly advanced culture. The Occidental scholars are now, therefore, driven to say, that these original inhabitants of a higher culture were conquered by the new immigrants of a lower culture who imposed their own ways on their defeated adversaries. But, such a statement is belied by all established facts of known history. In fact, except the mention of the battle of ten princes in the VIII Mandala of the Rgveda, there is not a single reference which would even indirectly suggest any invasion. And the battle of ten princes does not unequivocally bespeak invasion, even according to several Occidental scholars. What does it indicate except the partiality and even blindness of the scholars who do not hesitate to construct an elaborate edifice of a so-called invasion on the basis of a description of a battle found in only three out of a thousand hymns in the Rgveda, but cannot even accept the theory of rebirth which is patent from the Hymn अस्य वामस्य (*Asya vāmasya*), the concept of four types of languages, the concept of four varnas from the पुरुषसूक्त (*puruṣa sūkta*), or that of the images of deities from the hymn रुद्रम मनेन्द्र ऋणाति etc. in the IV Mandala for a so-called lack of adequate evidence? Once the idea that the battle of the ten princes represents foreign

invasion is disproved, the theory of Āryan migration also falls, for want of other adequate evidence. Analogy, which is always ambiguous or may be construed both ways and was for some time too much exalted by the Occidental scholars, is now leaving them in the lurch. The idea that the battle of ten princes represents a foreign invasion, unwise insistence on analogy, the prejudice that those who inhabited India at the time of the invasion and the imperfect understanding of the term Samskr̥ti are the main props of the theory. Once they are proved unreliable not only the idea of immigration is disproved but European scholars have to beat a retreat and further to accept that the ancestors of the Vedic people, far from coming into India went out of India as stated by Manu and that their culture became vitiated by contacts with external races. In fact this thesis is so simple and convincing that there is nothing improbable in it, but even a learned man with a deep rooted prejudice is unwilling to accept even simple propositions. For instance, while refuting the theory of emigration of Āryans it is argued, that no one can adequately show why they suddenly returned, leaving their own empire. Even Romans in European history who went on expanding and extending their empire had to quit countries like Britain on account of difficulties of their own. And yet, their culture survived them in these lands. In islands like Jāva and Bālī there was no continuance of communication with the Āryans who founded empires there and yet, we do find the remnants and various forms of Āryan culture there even today. It is difficult to understand why in spite of these eloquent instances in world history, these learned scholars hesitate only while accepting the imperial expansion of their Vedic ancestors. The Āryan expansionists are very likely to have quit their colonies in the same predicament as Roman imperialists. The thesis that the Āryans came to India from their Arctic home, probably on account of some natural calamity like snowstorms, has almost come to command

common acceptance What inconsistency is then there, in saying that they *returned* and not merely came to India ? The theory based on analogy alone can never finally decide the question that they returned or merely came Similary, it is not necessary that similar instances must be found from the Arctic region contiguously up to the Indian frontiers Even if mere similarities are to be noticed, one point deserves particular attention Almost all archaeological remains from Peru and Mexico and Kamaschatka on the one hand, and from Australia to Cape Horn on the other, show similarity with remnants of Indian culture, or with remnants of other cultures, having a striking similarity with Indian ones There are almost no relics of ancient times bearing any appreciable resemblance to other independent elements and aspects developed by non-Indian cultures At times there is some striking similarity in such minute traits in customs and traditions (*samskāras*) and in different types and images that they evoke a curiosity that is not easily satisfied The impression of the hand of the Sati found in the Mayan temples in Mexico bear close resemblance to similar impressions on the main gate of Jodhpur A few years ago a writer had pointed out the almost amazing similarity in the language of the South Americans and the Marathi language Such striking instances of similarity with culture can lead only to one conclusion, namely, though several inter-connecting links are missing at the present moment, the Vedic culture must, once upon a time, have had embraced the whole globe Another point to be noticed is, that not all the instances of similarity are adequate to establish homogeneity of race among all these peoples or invasion of one by the other One has to stretch one's imagination to the farthest extent to accommodate such a fantastic hypothesis What Keith has said about the Indo-European languages may generally be extended to all theories based on mere similarities Says Keith, "all the Indo-European languages have certain special points in which they agree

with one or another of the group, and to deduce a racial mixture and migration from these facts is quite impossible". Brockhouse goes a step further when he states that the self-respecting Brahmin community has not borrowed anything from anybody in the world.

To sum up, all their notions such as that of invasion, the primitive character of the Rgvedic people, their nomadic state, their animism and the like, are, to borrow a phrase from Shakespeare 'the very coinage of the brain' of the Occidental scholars. They have been developed in thorough ignorance of the inner aspect of Indian life. They even betray a superficial acquaintance with the external aspects of Indian life. On the other hand evidence to the contrary can easily be had even without delving into the secrets of Geology. The period commonly assigned to the composition of the Rgveda was acceptedly one of a very highly advanced culture. There is nothing strange in thinking that Vedic culture was the product of this period and by dint of its merits spread over the whole globe. But this thesis has other bases than imagination. There are numerous important allusions in Samskr̥t literature of Indians having ruled extra-Indian empires. Many of them cannot easily be brushed aside as pieces of poetic imagination. The allusion to King Balhika in the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa is of great importance. Even the Mahābhārata clearly mentions that the Great-grand-uncle of the Pāṇavas ruled over the Balhika country which kingdom had passed to him from his maternal uncle. Thus Central Asia, which is referred to as the mere original home of the Aryans or as a significant link in their invasion is seen to have been the scene of prosperity of Indian culture at some stage. The importance of this piece of evidence cannot be under rated. The age of the Satapatha-Brāhmaṇa has been fixed at 2900 B C on the basis of astronomical calculations. King Balhika mentioned in it must therefore, have preceded it. At any rate Indian culture was independently well-known to the nations of Central Asia at least by 2900 B. C. The Indian empire must further

be concluded to have been much larger than that of any other nation Striking similarities between the traits of other cultures (e g Iran, Babylonia & Chaldea) and Indian culture are most probably due to this connection\* which seems to have continued for several centuries In the inscription at Mittani (circa 1000-1200 B C ) there is mention of the names of Vedic deities In the Br̥hatkathā, Vatsrāja is said to have invaded Irān and in the Raghuvamsa of Kālidās King Raghu is said to have scored a victory over the Parsis Though the latter two may have been subsequently written they are likely to contain a considerable amount of element of historical truth, because these writers have clearly mentioned that they have based their descriptions on information handed down by tradition The brick inscriptions of Chaldea make it clear that, though, the history in them refers to a period of four to five thousand B C the direct references contained in these inscriptions are comparatively very recent At any rate, they are not older than the period assigned by astronomical calculations to the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa The excavations at Mohenjadaro and Harappa have now established that, there was communication between the Sumerian culture and the Indus Valley culture Putting all these links together it can definitely be asserted that traits of similarity between Indian and other cultures are due to Indian influence rather than Indian borrowing The same may be stated about the traits of the culture of the Parsis, but, we shall refer to this point at a later stage

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\* The Jews were originally Indians A J Edmonds and M Anesaki observe in their "Buddhist and Christian Gospels" that it is clear from the Book of Josephus (Apion I,22) that Aristotle had reliably learnt from Jewish scholars tha the Jewish people descended from the Brahmins of India In view of the importance of this fact, he asked his disciple the Clearchus of Soli to make a note of this fact Edmonds and Anesaki remark in their foot note "Clearchus of Soli, the authority here, considered the Jews themselves of Hindu origin But, allowing for this exaggeration, the fact underneath it probably is, that a certain sect had such an origin."

Among the aspects of Indian culture, which are consciously or unconsciously neglected, two deserve special notice, namely, the particular character of the R̄gveda as a compilation together with the deductive stage of the Vedic literature and the confusion of the absence of mention (अनुस्तेव) with the absence of existence (अनुपलक्षित). The R̄gveda is after all a composite collection of poems. Absence of mention of a thing in it, does not, therefore, necessarily mean that, the thing was not known or was not in existence. Despite difference of views as regards the time, place and manner of the original compilation of the R̄gvedic hymns, one thing is beyond doubt, the compilation which is before us today must have taken place about 2500-3000 B C. At that stage these hymns were collected as already being in existence. The general policy in this compilation was based on the fact that different sages collected them in groups, each group containing the hymns of one and the same family. This does not necessarily mean that a whole hymn meant a whole song. Even in one and the same hymn different verses have been brought together. At the most, care has been taken to bring verses pertaining to the gods, or the same group of gods, within the framework of one and the same hymn. It is, therefore, at times that verses within the same hymn are not connected one to the other, by an order of precedence of textual recital. It is, therefore, not correct to examine and judge them as if they were written by a modern writer with a logical order of precedence before his mind's eye. For instance, Hālā's Gāthā Saptaśati is a compilation of 700 Gāthās. Any one of these is not necessarily connected with the preceding or the following one. If they are to be pressed as evidence in the service of history, each Gāthā should be treated as an independent work.

The same is true of the argument from absence of references. Scholars like MacDonnel only say that, in the study of Samskr̄t literature *argumentum ex silentio* cannot be given much value but more than half the

inferences, if not more, of Occidental scholars writing on this subject, are based on absence of references Absence of a reference is not the same thing as *Anupalabdhi* (unavailability) occurring in the Indian science of logic. Where two things are related to one another as cause and effect with the non-existence of the cause, the non-existence of the effect is already proved This is called *Anupalabdhi* The non-existence of the effect needs no separate attempt to prove But the vice-versa is not equally true Mere existence of cause does not prove the existence or non-existence of effect *Argumentum ex silentio* is not *Anupalabdhi* A mere non-mention of a thing does not help any valid inference European scholars have made a jumble of these and used *Anupalabdhi* as non-mention and non-mention as *Anupalabdhi* accordingly as suited their purpose Following on these lines, European scholars have drawn several inferences and where they have failed to find references according to those inferences, they have treated this non-existence or rather non-mention as non-availability They have thus tried to parade their scholarship in this manner In a compendium like *Gāthā saptaśati* one cannot treat case of non-mention as a case of non-availability and insist on the latter In such circumstances Occidental scholars (and their Indian followers, so blindly imitating them) have held Vedic culture in a pair of scissors, as it were, cutting it between the argument of non-availability, on the one hand, and treating their inductive references—based on their own conditions—as unexceptionally established theories on the other, and have spun elaborate webs like spiders

Besides the all-important errors indicated above, we may mention two or three other flaws in Occidental research Despite the encyclopaedic and collective nature of the Rgveda one more thing deserves particular attention and it is the colossal destruction of the treasures of ancient literature Even compendia in large numbers have a value of their own, but unfortunately Indian literary treasures, which dazzled human imagination, have been continually destroyed on a colossal scale for

centuries together. Such an important aspect cannot be lost sight of while drawing inferences about Indian culture. This is not to gainsay the fact, that inferences that can definitely be drawn, will have to be based on the researches into extant works and the sciences associated with them, but one thing should definitely be remembered, namely, that there was plentiful literature of this kind in ancient times. Things, only casually mentioned in the course of Vedic literature, might have been detailed in some of the works which have unfortunately been destroyed. Similarities as regards language, customs and manners, folklore, philosophy which are found with extra-Indian literature but which cannot be properly co-ordinated and synthesised with the available body of Indian literature—and which are therefore looked upon as independent but which cannot be likewise coordinated and systematically explained even by the other cultural traits of the countries where these are found, might possibly be traced to that literature. There is a great likelihood that the common explanatory roots of all things might have been embodied in some of these extinct works. Granting that a certain thing is not mentioned in extant Indian literature, it would be rash, to say the least, to infer that it is borrowed. It will be perfectly logical to argue that several foreign traits, which cannot be adequately explained by the philosophy or cosmology of the cultures in which they are found, might also have been basically explained in literature that might have become extinct. Such a conclusion would definitely be convincing. One definite reason for this is, that even European scholars admit, Indian cosmology is radically different from the cosmologies of other people. It is said in the "Vedic hymns", that, "the cosmography of the Vedas is so different from our own" and it is further argued that verses and words should be interpreted only in view of the cosmological concepts of Vedic sages "Whether the surging sea (आण्वं स्मृद्धं) is to be taken for the sea or for the air depends on the view which we take of the earlier cosmology of the Vedic Rsis."

Another thing to be borne in mind is, that the period of the prosperity of Vedic literature is not one of continuous rise as commonly supposed, but is characterised by a wave movement, as it were, and can therefore, be sub-divided into epochs like maxima and minima. According to current notions the age of Pāṇini, the great grammarian, is taken to be 800 B.C. But it cannot be said that the various types of literary productions came into being only after Pāṇini. Even before him there had been a period of prosperity for some type of literature. There is a room to believe that that period was more prosperous than any epoch in known history. The Mahābhārata supposed to have been written circa 250-300 B.C. itself refers to ancient literature. The Smṛtis available at the present times themselves admit that they are but summaries of earlier (original) smṛtis. Even so is the case with other works. In Samskr̥t literature other than the Vedic, almost all scientific writers without exception, frankly and humbly confess that they were writing their works on the basis of earlier standard works. Authors like Vātsyāyana, the renowned writer on the science of erotics, clearly testifies to the fact that he was merely abridging the earlier works which were far more extensive. Āchārya Viṣṇu Gupta, the author of the aphoristic science of politics known as Kautilya's Arthaśāstra consisting of verses, says that he has prepared it from the condensed abstracts of many other earlier works. Even Pāṇini draws upon prior authorities. In spite of the labyrinth of controversies regarding the epochs of Vedic literature the age of the Chāndogya and Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisads is definitely accepted as pre-Pāṇinian. Of the two the Brhadāraṇyaka seems to be the earlier from the traditional line of teachers mentioned in both. The several allusions in these two Upanisads throw valuable sidelights on the versatile prosperity reached in the literature of the time. Not only were the four Vedas, Itihāsa (history), Purāna (Mythology), Mathe-

matics (Gaṇita). Astronomy (Jyotiṣa), Theology (Devavidyā). spirituology (knowledge of the various spirits—Bhūtavidyā), Astrology (Nakṣatravidyā), Medicine (Auṣadhiśāstra) or Sarpa-deva-jana-vidyā available then but commentaries and elaborate elucidations had been written on them. Though all this vast body of literature is not available today the large number of references to these are scattered in latter Samskr̥t literature. Assuming that the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad is comparatively of later date there is no gainsaying that the Mundaka is earlier. A reference\* in it shows that the science of yoga had also much advanced at that time. It cannot be adequately imagined what a vast amount of precious jewels scattered in this highly developed body of literature were sunk in the abyss of time. Yet it is not possible to relegate them to oblivion. It is possible to point out more succession of misconceptions even in the honest research work done by Occidental scholars in similar other cases. but such a task is beyond the scope of this limited work. It is, therefore, necessary to come back to our subject after dilating on a very important type of error.

On the basis of this method of research almost all modern scholars have come to their fond conclusion, that in ancient times there was no fourfold order of Varnas or if at all it was, the Varṇa was not determined by birth like the four-caste system which we discern today. This results in completely ignoring an important fact, which must be born in mind in the study of Indian culture. In Indian culture the Brāhmaṇas as a Varṇa have a typical function assigned to them and they have developed their own independent culture pattern within the more comprehensive framework of Vedic culture. This could be illustrated with an instance from Indian Music. Just as a singer, or a player on an instrument to his accompaniment, plays the elements of a particular melody

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\* गना: कला. पंचकृ. प्रतिष्ठा etc.

(rāga) while retaining one basic note, so also in spite of numerous minor changes the Brahmins have uniformly and incessantly maintained and retained a culture pattern of their own from times immemorial. This Brahmanical sub-culture is entirely Vedic and has been so retained for the preservation of Vedic culture itself at great sacrifice and unimaginable martyrdom, to the utter neglect of worldly pleasures for generations together. In order to deserve permanently the privilege of leadership of mankind they voluntarily subjected themselves to several restrictions, with the result that there were striking differences between their own community and the rest of the society even in minor details of life. But such a distinctive life became second nature to them and no one even thought of particularly mentioning these special traits as a differentia of the Brahmins, just as no one would even particularly think of suggesting that a real brother and a sister should not be married (as such a thing is unconsciously ruled out in all civilized social life). As already pointed in the literature, the special features of the Brahmin class implicitly understood are not explicitly mentioned. The significance of this fact is, that descriptions of a general application occurring in literary works have to be interpreted with this proviso in mind. If, for instance, in Maratha History in the 18th century, it was mentioned that the Peshwa (a Brahmin) dined at the house of a Patel (usually a non-Brahmin) it was not particularly necessary to mention that the meal was prepared by a Brahmin cook. But such a mention would be necessary at the present moment. Several inferences drawn from references in mythological works sometimes do not reflect the general state of affairs in that age. For instance, the Purāṇas (Mythological Works) mention that princesses were generally taught dancing and music, from which the modern scholar rushes to the conclusion that all women in society were so trained. Instances of marriages

between grown-ups or love marriages belong to a similar type. If we leave out a few romantic tales in the Brihatkatha, cases of Brahmin girls being trained in dancing and music would not even number five in the whole expansive body of Samskr̥t literature. In mediaeval times, though, remarriage of woman was prevalent among other castes, it was unthinkable in the Brahmin community. One cannot, therefore, draw a conclusion on the basis of a few stray references to remarriage scattered in literature, that there were remarriages among Brahmins as well. In a collective piece of work like the R̥gveda a reference to such a type cannot indicate a general practice in all strata of society.

The root cause of such a defect is the presupposition that, in the Vedic age there was no four-varna system, at any rate it was not based on birth. There is no basis for such a prejudice except the absence of a reference to the system, positive according to the notion of the Occidentals. The division of the R̥gvedic hymns into different mandalas and a chronology based on such a division, are both arbitrary. Secondly, words denoting the Brahmin caste in the Vedic language, have not always been so interpreted by Sāyana, the great commentator on the R̥gveda. The chronology of the different mandalas is, as usual, based on the undue valuation of the linguistic evidence. That is to say, mandalas containing older words are assigned to earlier periods in history, but it is a patent fact, that a lapse of time is not absolutely necessary for transitions in language whether ordinary or extraordinary. Even territorial differences can account for such transitions and when literature reaches a certain standard form, different writers may introduce different styles of writing. Even in the writings of one and the same writer on different subjects a variety of styles is in evidence. The tenth mandala of the R̥gveda includes miscellaneous topics. The subjects are many in number and the style is also remarkably different; but all this does not warrant the conclusion that

chronologically it comes later. This is the considered opinion of several scholars. If we press pure logic into our service and bring an unprejudiced mind to work on the subject, there will be found to be adequate evidence not only to show, that the four-varna system did exist in Rgvedic times, but also to suppose that the sole criteria of the varna was birth. As this question is of basic importance for the topics to be dealt with in this work, it is necessary to go deeper into it.

In the Rgveda terms like 'vipra', 'brahmā', 'ksatra', 'vis' occur again and again and in the Purusasūkta all the four varnas including the Sūdra are unequivocally referred to. Even if it is assumed that the tenth mandala in which the Purusasūkta occurs is of later origin, it refers to the four-varna system as an established institution. The question of congenitality apart, there is no more room for any doubt that the institution did exist. But in the earlier mandalas of the Rgveda there is no specific reference which would positively satisfy the prejudice of Occidental scholars. Their sole edifice of the non-existence of the four-varna system in the Rgvedic Age, rests on the doubtful foundation of the non-mention of this system in the body of the Rgveda. Whatever the amount of labour expended by Occidental scholars, they cannot deny their considerable debt to Sāyana. Even the great astronomer Ganesh Darvajīha to whom all credit is due for his unmistakable astronomical ephemeris, humbly admits that, his intellect has been nursed on past sciences while praying that egotism may not overtake him. But the case of the Occidental scholars is different. While confessing their debt to Sāyana they do not hesitate to rush to conclusions attempting to prove Sāyana himself to be in the wrong on the sole basis of their imagination. Their case is as quoted earlier—'as if their personal feelings had all the weight of scientific argument'. Goldstucker's criticism on the St. Petersberg Lexicon would repay perusal.

Swami Vivekananda appropriately remarked when he read the English translation of the Rgveda, especially the translation of the Hymn of Creation (नारद्य सूक्तम्) made by European scholars, "In translating the Sūktas, pay particular attention to the Bhāshyakāras and pay no attention whatever to the Orientalists. They do not understand a single thing about our shastras. It is not given to dry philologists to understand philosophy or religion . . . . for instance, the word अनीश्वातम् in the Rgveda was translated - He lived without breathing. Now, here the reference is really to the chief Prāna and अवातम् has the root meaning for unmoved, that is, vibration. It describes the state in which the Universal Cosmic energy or Prāna remains before the kalpa begins. The Bhāshyakāras explain everything according to sages and not according to the socalled European Scholars. What do they know ?" The Swami's remarks are thoroughly borne out by the strange inferences of the European scholars from the Hymn of Creation. For instance, they have inferred that the author of the hymn was sceptic who has hesitantly expressed his ideas in it. The author has, in fact, positively described the state in which the universal cosmic energy or Prāna remains before the Kalpa begins. The reason why he is pronounced a sceptic is the sheer inability of his critics to comprehend the inner meaning of the author. If the author says that even the creator may or may not have known it, it is not due to his own scepticism but due to the weakness of human intellect and speech. By contrasting this human weakness he has enhanced the importance of the Supreme. Hardly can a Plotinus in the Western tradition rise to the required heights to comprehend such a truth. It is not given to Dick, Tom or Harry to dabble in metaphysical truths. Following in the footsteps of Māndukya Upnaniṣad Plotinus remarks, "When a soul is aware of it, it possesses it as a thing that is alien to it; when on the contrary it is not aware of it, it is a real possession. यो अस्याध्यक्षः

पर्सन्व्यानन् सो अन्नं वृद्धं यदि वा न। Knowledge in effect is a discourse and a discourse in multiplicity. In order to contemplate the First Being, a man must be raised above knowledge. It would, in fact, be ridiculous to try to understand that incomprehensible nature ..... The problem must be given up and research falls into silence."

This is the general character of the European science of research Indigenous scholars borrowing it exactly as it is, have plied their intellect and have themselves been moulded on these lines Perhaps, the most ambitious effort so far made by an indigenous scholar, after studying Vedic literature in its entirety, to draw some definite conclusions, has been that of the Editor of the Mahārashtra Encyclopaedia. He has clearly shown independence of judgment and made an advance over his Occidental masters Some of his inferences e.g that there is no history of the Āryan invasion in the Rgveda, that the battle of ten princes was not one between the Āryans and the non-Āryans but a conflict of people in a homogenous culture, and that at the time of the advent of the Aryans the indigenous people, far from being primitive, had reached a high cultural stage, are indeed very proper and laudable, despite the fact, that even these inferences are based on the above mentioned defective science of research But this very "science" has been responsible for his fundamental drawbacks in his position For instance, he still persists in maintaining that the cultures of the Mantra period and that of the Sūta period are different, that Brahmanical literature pertains to the latter, that the period of the compilation of the hymns marks the nadir of the institution of sacrifice It is intended in this work to bring out the shortcomings of these notions In this chapter the logic of Occidental researchers has briefly been characterised Let us now examine the application of this logic to the researches in vedic chronology.

### THREE

## THE SCIENCE OF RESEARCH

"We really have to deal rather with a strong and cumulative drift of opinion or prejudice or pre-conception—as we may choose to call it—than with established fact."

"The sympathetic study of her past suffers from having largely been forced upon the country from outside, and it is difficult for outsiders to believe that the same thing has not happened before, that it is not indeed somewhat distinctive of Indian development."

—Sister Nivedita

What Sister Nivedita has said about Indian Art development is equally true of the study of Indian culture as we have already seen in the last chapter. Let us now proceed to consider what influence such research has had on the determination of Vedic chronology. It is this question of chronology which has unduly been emphasised by European scholars, and has resulted in the so-called extensive research work done in this branch. The egotism of European scholars is almost without a parallel. The way in which they have attempted to solve this question of chronology, namely the method of deciding chronology with the help of several different sciences, obscures even its glaring defects. Even in Lokmanya Tilak's independent attempt to determine Vedic chronology on the basis of astronomical calcula-

tions, the inferences of preceding scholars have been taken as axiomatic truths. As Sister Nivedita has remarked "What one man threw out as a tentative suggestion the other uses it as if it were an axiom" In such research work, Sister Nivedita continues "Evidently the best of us is apt to believe as he would wish or as he has prepared himself to think and there is a large fraction of pre-disposition in every robust conviction" For example it was customary to add twelve days at the end of the lunar year to reconcile it with the solar year. The deities Rbhū used to sleep at the end of the year to be awoken by a dog as described in the Rgveda It is now commonly accepted that this is an allegory which explains the reconciliation of the lunar with the solar year But the identification of the twelve days with the sleeping period of Rbhū deities is a strange notion which had its origin in the imaginative mind of the western scholars and which was borrowed exactly in the same form by our scholars We shall have occasion to consider this at a later stage Suffice it to remark here that although the Brāhmaṇa works have a convention that the gods love indirect speech there is some limit to it In the absence of such a limit any attempt at an interpretation results in fantastic inferences as I have pointed out in the appendices.

I think that in dealing with astronomical allegories one thing is easily ignored Little attention is paid to the natural trends in the development of human imagination From times immemorial man is fond of metaphors and allegories. The farther back we go, the more specifically pronounced is this trait But it is equally true that the trend of human imagination is from the direct to the indirect, from the palpable to the impalpable and from real experience to poetic imagery While it is true that the sight of the different forms of constellations are the occasion for beautiful poetic conceit, it is also true that the standard of comparison has its basis in the reality of experience. He only visualises in the standard of comparison what he has already realized and experienced.

In the absence of any such previous experience, figures of speech like simile, metaphor, poetic conceits cannot simply arise. The period, therefore, during which imaginative stories were based on constellations must be comparatively later. It must have been preceded by some real incidents in human history and followed by a superimposition of that incident on constellations. For instance, when poetic allegories like Prajāpati outraging the modesty of his own daughter and assuming, in consequence, the form of a deer to be shot by an arrow from Rudra, were conceived, the story of Prajāpati was literally or metaphorically wellknown. It does not stand to reason that some one first fabricated such a story which subsequently assumed a religious importance. The main difficulty in admitting the latter possibility is that the poet would normally think of a hunter shooting a deer. It is not easy to conceive of the earlier part of the story, referring to outraged modesty of daughter in the form of a deer, and further the idea of such an outrage can be associated even with a revered deity like Prajāpati. Whether we consider it historically or metaphorically, the conclusion is inescapable that the story was already ripe and was subsequently superimposed on the figure of a constellation.

Similar doubts arise with regard to the allegory of the Rbhús already mentioned above. This work is assigned to a period when the lunar and the solar years were reconciled. Such a reconciliation must naturally be deemed important by the followers of the lunar year. If we were to assign this portion of the Rgveda to a period when the Āryans inhabited the North Pole, we have to commit ourselves to the position that the Āryans in the Arctic region observed the lunar year which is clearly impossible for the simple reason that the moon is invisible at least for six months of the year in the Arctic region. Hence the concept of the lunar year and its reconciliation with the solar year is barren. If at all these two types of calculations arose among the Āryans it must be after they came

down from the Arctic region, whatever the supposed date of their migration. It is also likely that the ideas predate the expansion of the Aryans and simply prove that Bhārat was the original homeland.

Even if we treat it as a metaphor this concept is fraught with some shortcomings. If at all the two types of calculations had to be reconciled the need would be felt by those following the lunar year and a reconciliation would be valued more by them as their year would gain by twelve days. But the solar year with which their year was reconciled was already being observed and hence these twelve days must have already been included in some season or the other. The followers of the lunar year need not, therefore, specially value it. In these circumstances if we have to adopt the above idea of conciliation in the polar region we have to take two things for granted. The one is that even the followers of the solar year must have rejected these twelve days from their seasons. The other is that a new cult altogether of persons observing these twelve days came into vogue and that the above verse exclusively belongs to this cult. The *Rgveda*, as it is available today, does not leave room for such a supposition, but even if we accept it for the sake of argument (as it is not altogether impossible) we are confronted with further difficulties.

If it is said that this verse symbolises a reconciliation of the solar and lunar years, it follows, as already pointed out above, that it cannot originate in the Arctic region. The late Lokamanya Tilak, working on the idea that this verse refers to summer solstice (*Miga Sampāta*), has fixed 4,500 B.C. as its date on astronomical grounds, but if it was an allegory on the summer solstice the writer of the hymn must, even at that stage, have known its allegorical character. He must also have had a very good knowledge of the external circumstances on which this metaphor was constructed as well as of the fact that the hymn was

only metaphorical. The hymn containing this verse contains further description of the *Rbhūs* and if that particular verse is metaphorical the whole hymn must also be so; because, from the other miracles described in it, the *Rbhūs* are seen to be human beings who had been elevated to a celestial grade. The hymn as a whole reveals the sentiment of the author to be devotional and credulous just as even today the poet might say that Shri Visu sleeps during the period of four months known as the *Chaturmāsc*. This shows that, at any rate, the author of the hymn was not conscious that he was composing metaphorical hymn. In the fourth mādala of *Rgveda* there is a reference to this very sleep of the *Rbhūs*. According to the *Sarvānukramanī* (general index of the *Rgvedic* hymns) the sages composing these two hymns are different. If two different sages independently work on one idea it is obviously not metaphorical but based on mythological sources, or in any case, there must have lapsed between these two hymns a sufficiently long period to account for the transition from the metaphorical to the mythological stage. Such an attempt (to fix a chronological interval between two hymns) is not possible today. All this discussion inevitably points to the conclusion that the metaphorical character of the verse was not present to the mind of the author and the verse must have been composed after the actual experience of the summer solstice (*Mṛga Sampāt*). We have, therefore, to take it for granted that long after the Arctic age, even after a long time after the summer solstice (*Mṛga Sampāt*) *Rgvedic* hymns had not acquired the character of mantras. All the natural phenomena, e. g. the sun, the wind, the rain, the nights, the days, the dawn which they are supposed to symbolize were known to the authors of the hymns only as natural phenomena and it was only after the summer solstice (*Mṛga Sampāt*) that the material happenings were forgotten and the hymns acquired the character of mantras. Even the

late Lokamanya Tilak might have been convinced that even the science of research on the basis of which he wrote his work would not have found this whole idea palatable. But this is not the only difficulty.

A great controversy has raged over the nature and meaning of the Kṛttikās (the plierades) mentioned in the Śatapatha Brāhamanas. Of all the stellar constellations visible on the eastern horizon the Kṛttikās have alone been singled out and it has specifically been stated that while all other stars swerve from their position, the Kṛttikās do not quit the East. If this has any meaning at all it is that the Kṛttikās were on the equator. That the Kṛttikās are not visible until they have crossed the 13th parallel and such other objections do not appear to be valid. On level ground their rise can be immediately discerned.

From the solstice of the Kṛttikās, the date of the Śatapatha has been roughly fixed at 2,300 B.C. but it should in fact go further back since the Kṛttikās have a declination and the equator must shift from the Kṛttikās even before the arrival of the solstice of the Kṛttikās. It is possible that the Kṛttikās will be just over equator only when Rohini is in the last stage of its solstice. Since the person who generalises about other stars remembers that they have swerved from their positions it is obvious that this refers to a stage when the preceding star swerved from its position and the Kṛttikās took its place. One more thing is to be taken into account. It takes a little longer time in the evening to discern the rise of stars. It does not take much time at night or early in the morning. The solar star which is to be adopted for installation of the sacred fire is to be taken after seeing the position of stars at sunrise or after sunset. According to this system the rise of the Kṛttikās on the equator must have been noticed before sunrise and hence they could be noticed even before they crossed the 13th parallel. The sun must naturally have been in the Mithuna Rāsi (Gemini). From all these

things the date of Śatapatha can more authentically be fixed at 2,900 B C. In the Brhadāranyaka Upanisad there is a question what became of the Pāriksitas after their demise? It is obvious that this must have been written after the reign of Pariksiti. The date of the Brhadāranyaka, even if we take it to be a later Upanisad, is not far removed from that of the Śatapatha. It describes the line of the adepts of the Mantha Vidyā which cannot be disbelieved. This means that according to the historical method a period of five centuries must have lapsed between the Brhadāranyaka and Śatapatha. Hence it appears that about 3,400 B C., lores like the science of the *Manthas* were in vogue in society. If we were to allow adequate time for the Rgveda to lose its metaphorical character and to acquire the character of mantras, for other Vedas to be constructed, for the sacrificial institutions of various types to evolve and culminate in the various cosmological lores (*Ādhi Darvika Vidyā*) the spiritual learning (*Adhyātmajnāna*), all these transitions must have taken place during the interval between 4,000 B. C. and 3,500 B C. The culture of a society which maintained its character for such a long period from the Arctic Age till after the Summer Solstice, (*Mrga Sampāt*) and which had constantly before its vision the mere metaphorical character of its literature\* must needs have been far above the ordinary. It must have had a solid foundation. Even the modern science of research cannot readily admit that all the above-mentioned miracles could have happened within a brief span of 500 years.

The above discussion does not, however, mean either that there are no metaphors in the Rgveda or that such metaphors cannot be helpful in historical chronology. Even German scholars like Winternitz

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\* Traditions of the Arctic Home appear to have been well understood by the bards of the Rgveda in the Orien periods

(*Arctic Home in the Vedas*, p 427)

admit that Rgvedic culture was of very high standard. Such a highly civilized people do and must have some spiritual philosophy. If once we accept the possibility of metaphors we must admit the possibility of all kinds of metaphors. All that I intend here is to bring clearly to the reader's notice that we have to face an anomalous position if we fall a prey to the notion that all the Rgvedic metaphors are exclusively astronomical or based on actual natural phenomena. I further wish to point out that several things in Rgveda have to be unravelled from the metaphysical point of view and that the Vedic Aryas had such a spiritual insight as is clearly borne out by the "Asya Vāmasya" hymn as also by the hymn of Creation.

In a discussion on the date of the Rgveda two factors must be considered. One is the battle of the ten princes described in it and the other the tenth mandala. The editor of the Marathi Encyclopaedia, after reviewing the entire discussion on the date of the Rgveda up to date, has fixed his own date on the basis of the battle of ten princes. The astronomical allusions have a significance only if we take the limited concept of the Europeans about the age of the cultured man. It will lose all its importance when this narrow concept will be proved baseless after adequate consideration. Even if we take it as it is for the time being, it leaves margin for a controversy as it is based on some conjectures. This is amply borne out by the concept of the 'Āgīahāyanī' put forth by a Marathi writer.\* If we have to term the star Phālguni (Leonid) as Arjuni simply because a creeper puts forth white foliage, what objection is there to term it similarly on the ground that in winter it is snow-white all round and if we once say so we shall have given rise to a new chronology as

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\* In Sanskrit Phālguni is also called Arjuni that is white. The writer has argued from this that the synonym was due to the beginning of summer solstice when the sun was in that constellation.

then winter would have to start from Phālguni ( a solar star ). Similarly, if we interpret the name Ārdrā literally so as to mean moist or wet it would have less to do with rains than with dew and consequently it would give rise to another chronology for this (moist or wet) star will have synchronized with a period when beautiful dew falls on early morning and crops of wheat and gram are standing in the fields ! In fine, although a few astronomical allusions are now and then helpful in determining chronology they create more anomaly when they are harnessed indiscriminately to the service of Vedic knowledge.

There is an additional reason why such names should not always be taken in a qualitative sense. The very names Sudāsa and Divodāsa for whose sake the battle of ten princes was fought are likely to indicate a qualitative sense because in the Rgveda itself the word Sudāsa has been used in qualitative sense.\* This enhances the possibility of other names also being qualitative. Dr Ketkar fixes the identity of the Sudāsa of the battle of ten princes and assigns Rāma and others to a much earlier age but strangely enough Pargiter's dynasties which Dr. Ketkar treats as authentic mention Sudāsa several generations before Rāma. Ketkar has given no reason why his Sudāsa cannot be identified with this earlier Sudāsa. The hymn makes this Sudāsa the son of Divodāsa but the solar dynasties do not mention Divodāsa at all. It is commonly accepted that names like Vaśistha and Viśvāmitra indicate dynasties. It cannot even be said, that the name of Sudāsa was altogether a new creation unprecedented by a similar name if it is included in the dynasties. The Rishis who were the authors of the hymns were acquainted with a dynasty known by the name Krṣṇa, and the compilers of the Vedas who were contemporaneous with the Puranic age also knew one Krṣṇa. No one identifies these two Krṣnas

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\* कर्म सत्त्वं सुदासो (५-५३-२).

Dr Ketkar himself admits that there is no means to determine the age of the Rgveda if the Sudāsa of the battle of ten princes cannot be identified. Would it not, therefore, be more honest to leave the whole question of the age of the Rgveda as incapable of determination at the present stage, instead of willy-nilly catching hold of Sudāsa and involving him in the battle of ten princes? So Ketkar has assigned Pauranic literature historical value and has used the battle of ten princes as pure historical evidence. His thesis has, therefore, to be examined in detail.

Ketkar's thesis briefly is that the whole of the Rgveda is haunted by the battle of ten princes. In order to prove this he has taken several things for granted which has involved inconsistencies in his own views. For instance, he holds that the author of the Sarvānukramani is accustommed to make sweeping statements and yet in the case of the battle of ten princes he takes this very Sarvānukramani as authentic. Similarly he asserts, although there is no proof to identify the Sudāsa mentioned in the battle of ten princes, that this Sudāsa is one and the same, everywhere in the Purānas, fixes a certain date for him and infers that the battle of the princes took place in his time and that the Rgveda is consequently of later period. He is naturally obliged to ignore several factors in making this somersault. For instance, he has to deny that the Risis (mentioned by Saunaka) were not the authors of the hymns but only compilers. He has lost sight of the fact that there is some importance in Sāyana interpreting words like *Parśu* in a qualitative sense. In Sāyana's time the present fad for the science of research had not been perfected nor was there any room for doubting that a non-Indian would lay any claim to Āryahood. Sāyana himself does not think the battle of ten princes to be allegorical. He knew from Mahābhārata that in a war in India there arose occasions when communities coming from outside Bhārata rendered help and hence

he had no reason deliberately to interpret community names in a qualitative sense. Nevertheless, he interprets words like *Parśu* in a qualitative sense. This can only mean that earlier works on whose unbroken tradition he based his commentary had also maintained the same tradition. Hence his interpretations must have been truer to facts.

This is borne out by an ordinary illustration. Ketkar treats the word 'Parśu' as indicating the Parsis but I do not think that in the whole body of literature subsequent to Rgveda, this word anywhere indicates the Parsis.\* The word *Pārasika* clearly indicates the Parsis and cannot in way be taken to be a corruption of the word Parśu. Besides even the word Asura is taken to indicate the Parsis. We have then to say that one and the same community was indicated by two terms Asura and Parśu. Assuming that, out of these the word Asura later on meant a superhuman order, it is difficult to see why the word Parśu should altogether disappear from the language and why the word *Pārasika* should be found in later Samskr̥t literature. This only means that just as European scholars created a new term Ārya to indicate an ethnic meaning, Ketkar boosted up the word 'Parśu' to indicate an ethnic sense without any basis simply to prop up his pet theory, in order to foist some age on the Rgveda. Winternitz has candidly confessed that, "it is greater service to science to confess our ignorance than to deceive ourselves and others by producing dates which are no dates. And after all it is comfort to know that we can set up at least some limit at not only to our knowledge but

\* Pāṇini the grammarian was acquainted with people known as Parśu (V-3-117), but they inhabited Central Asia, not Iran. If the Parsis were identical with the Parśus from the age of the Vedas to that of Pāṇini why does the 'Parśu' not abound in such references? Why is it changed to 'Pārasika'? Does even Avestan literature call the Parsis Parśus? This is all the coinage of Ketkar's brain.

also to our ignorance." One more fact has to be remembered in this connection. Ketkar has boosted up the independence and contemporaneity of the Soota culture and has assigned to its literature the importance of historical evidence. Was this literature limited to royal dynasties and to stories which helped to unravel allegories according to Ketkar's choice? If at all the stories and dynasties of the Soota literature have to be adopted why should not the cosmology and other notions be assigned to the same period? There is no reason for this distinction besides the author's prejudices.

There is yet another notion that the battle of ten princes narrates ecclesiastical conflicts between Vaśistha and Viśwāmitra. This, too, is a figment of imagination. Its only basis is the Puranic struggle between Vaśistha and Viśwāmitra among Sudāsa's priests. The Rgveda itself leaves no room for supposing such a quarrel. It says that Sudāsa's Aśwamedha (horse sacrifice) was carried to completion through Viśwāmitra's grace. But, this indicates no ecclesiastical conflict. It is customary to appoint a priest for a particular purpose although there may be another family priest. And this may explain the appearance of two priests at one and the same ritual. Even in the Rāmāyana, King Daśaratha performed the Aśwamedha sacrifice under the ecclesiastical leadership of the sage Rṣyaśīṅga although Vaśistha was the family priest of the Ikswākus. It is further made out that the battle of ten princes refers to an invasion by non-Bhāratiya dynasties. But this supposition, too, is equally groundless. Ketkar has shown with adequate evidence that the battle was not between Āryas and non-Āryas but between followers of the same culture. It is true that the battle mentions a fight on the bank of the Sindhu (the Indus) and the crossing of the Sindhu, but there is no evidence to show that the Sindhu was crossed from the west to the east and not in the opposite direction. According

to the battle of ten princes Sudāsa's enemies (like the army of Kauravas) included Āryas as well as Dēsas, i. e. non-Āryas. It is also likewise mentioned in the hymn itself, that, the battle was occasioned by the Aśwamedha sacrifice which reached its completion through the Viswāmitra's grace.

( अस्वं रथे प्रतुचतः सुवर्णः । ३।५।११

शशुभ्यन् नेत्रमितिं द्वाम । ४।८।१९ )

The latter quotation means that the horse reached its destined place. This makes it clear that these battles were not battles of aggression but were battles for the glory of suzerainty (Digvijaya), like Raghu's battles on the banks of the Vanksu.\* Even in this connection one thing has to be borne in mind. This campaign clearly mentions the east (prāk) the west (appāk) and the north (udak) but is singularly silent about the south. There is no occasion for a mention of the west and the north in the description of an invasion by foreigners through the Khyber Pass. On the contrary it would be imperative that in such an invasion the south should be mentioned along with the east. In spite of all these glaring facts the battle of ten princes is foisted on the age of the Rgveda and characterized as indicative of an aggression by a different race.

I have already said earlier that if the Soota literature is to be taken as authentic, there is no reason why the cosmology and other things contained in it should not likewise be relied upon and I am going to say at a later stage that they should be so relied upon. But once this is done, even the largest pyramids of research constructed by the modern science of research topple down as if they were rocked by an earthquake. Sāyanāchāraya has in the course of his commentary, unravelled several episodes from the spiritual point of view. If everything is to be taken

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\* Kālidās, the famous poet has described this battle in his Raghuvansha, canto IV.

as an allegory even the battle of ten princes can be shown as spiritual allegory. We are well acquainted with the individual soul (*Jivātmā*) which is struggling day and night with the ten organs (five sense organs and five organs of action). The names of *Vaśistha* and *Viśwāmitra* do not indicate individuals but connote the sun and the moon as pointed out by some learned savants. It is also well-known that the sun stands for the supreme soul (*paramātmā*) and the moon for the mind. Why should then this allegory not be taken as proved? The only two reasons making us deny it, namely, that, there is no clear mention of it adequate enough to convince European scholars, and that the European scholars think that it was then too early for the people to cherish such ideas. So far as my view is concerned I do not suppose that it is imperative to treat the battle of ten princes allegorically, nor that *Vaśistha* and *Viśwāmitra* connote the sun and the moon. But I do not rule out the possibility of an allegory altogether.

This is the position of the battle of ten princes which has been harnessed as a basic factor in chronological and other major historical inferences. Several other historical edifices constructed on this foundation topple down like a house of cards. I have singled out Ketkar for criticism as he has put forth his thesis after a subtle analysis of the controversies carried on by European scholars on this subject. I shall briefly indicate the conclusions which he has drawn from this analysis. He has shown that the word 'Ārya' as used in the Vedas is not ethnic in content and has also disproved the European notion that the Vedas narrate the Āryan conquest of Dasyus (barbarians). Among his other confessions some are sure to corroborate my arguments in the coming pages that even from the battle of the ten princes we have no indication of the Āryan invasion on the non-Āryans but that it was a battle between two communities within a homogeneous culture and that there is no other means to determine

the age of the Rgveda if the identity of the Sudāsa of the battle of ten princes is not proved. One other major basis which western scholars have used in order to draw several conclusions from the Rgveda is that the tenth mandala is comparatively later. 'Later' does not here mean "constructed after the date of compilation" but "later as compared to other hymns" The tenth mandala considerably helps an understanding of the history of the age in which the Rgveda was compiled in its present form and even this history is insufficiently ancient. But it is obvious that even this period is not the period which is called the Vedic age. Treating the tenth mandala as later has placed a tool in the hands of European scholars. It is a peculiarity of the Rgveda that its first nine mandalas do not specifically refer to any episode in any social life. Although several hymns allude to certain occurrences they are primarily prayer hymns and not occasioned by those occurrences. It is in the tenth mandala that several word pictures of social episodes have been included. If this very tenth mandal is regarded as an interpolation the whole field is free for the inventive scholar to portray the social life of the Vedic people in any way he feels on the strength of *argumentum ex silentio*. For example, the meanings of several words in Rgvedic hymns and the consequent inferences are based on the dogged supposition of occidental orientalists that there was no four-varna system during the Rgvedic age. This supposition owes its origin to two factors, namely, that the tenth mandala and specially the Purusa-sūkta contained in it is recent and that in the ninth mandala there is no specific mention of the four varna system. And, pray, why is the Purusa-sūkta recent? Because it specifically mentions the four-varna system and, further, pray, why is a mention of the four-varna system recent? Because the first nine mandalas do not mention it In fact, the nine mandalas abound in the use of the terms *Ksatra* and *Brāhma* Although Sāyanāchārya has differently interpreted these terms in

different places he has in some places interpreted them to connote the four-varna system. But why are those interpretations rejected as unauthentic ? The occidental orientalist does not (as he did not) assign any reason for it. The four-varna system was in existence in this age. The word "Brahmaputra" has been used several times in the sense of Brāhmaṇa in the Rgvedic hymns. There are several pieces of evidence to prove that hereditary brahmanhood had been established during the mantra period and Ketkar admits that the Brāhmaṇa class had come into existence hereditarily even before the sacrificial institution of the Traividyaś (Marathi Encyclopaedia Vol III, pp 474-478) and yet, the thesis (?) that there was no four-varna system during that age is taken as firmly established and as a result, even the Purusasūkta is pronounced posterior simply because it makes a reference to it. What better illustration of what is known as the vicious circle could be found than the argument that the four-varna system is later because it is mentioned only in the Purusasūkta and that the Purusasūkta is later because it specifically mentions the four-varna system !

Among the various reasons assigned for supposing the tenth mandala as an interpolation are the following two —

In the first place the total number of hymns in the tenth mandala is the same as that in the first and the forms of certain words in it are somewhat different from the forms of those words in the earlier Mandalas in the text of the Rgveda. The number of hymns is entirely a matter of choice of the compiler and if the total number of hymns in the first and last mandalas is exactly the same, the only possible direct inference is that the whole compilation bears the stamp of one hand. We do not rule out the possibility of a subsequent compiler being tempted to include the same number of hymns in the last as in the first mandala, but it only leads to the possible conclusion that this notion is not materially helpful to

the determination of chronology. As for the forms of certain words which are different and seem modern they too do not substantially corroborate the argument. It is a matter of common knowledge that language undergoes modification according to subject-matter as well as territorial differences. The hymns in the first nine mandalas being inspired by sublime sentiments are prone to appear as being cast in the uniform style. A different style is natural in socially useful hymns of the tenth mandala intended for occasions like marriage, funeral rites, ancestral oblations, etc. They even admit of certain provincial differences. In fact, the very presence of various kinds of topics in the tenth mandala leads in my opinion, to the inference that the hymns in it must be older. For, people belonging to a high culture cannot be reasonably expected to confine their utterances to mere prayers. Their literature must needs include various episodes in human life and expressions of several human sentiments. It must also include several songs which might have been cited as a matter of ritual on such occasions. There is no reason, whatsoever, to suppose that at the time of compilation, all other literature perished to the exclusion of prayer hymns. In fact it stands to reason that the compiler, after having collected prayer hymns, felt the need for including ritualistic hymns in yet another independent part. This, therefore, does not interfere with the position that the hymns in the tenth mandala also belong to the Vedic period alone. At any rate, there is no convincing argument to show that they were far removed from the period usually known as the period of the composition of hymns and, unless and until, such a convincing argument is forthcoming, it is logical to hold that they were composed sooner or later in the same age and reflect the cultural life of that age. The whole error is due to ignorance of the distinction between cultural history and a history of events. The canons for the study of each are different.

In the study of cultural history difference of age and difference of language do not much matter To take an instance from Marathi literature, although Shri Jñāneśwara and Rāmāvallabha are removed chronologically, by about three centuries, ideologically they are homogeneous i. e they represent the same cultural life.\*

Research into Vedic culture at the hands of Occidental scholars may appropriately be compared to the Nuzool department of modern times It is true that possession is nine points in law, but with whom are the proprietary rights vested? Is it the people inhabiting the land who are its real proprietors and the ruler, a sort of manager, enjoying the privileges and deriving revenue to that extent, or is the ruler the sole proprietor? It is no doubt an important question in law No ruler, at any earlier stage in India, had any reason to be pre-occupied with this question But it was a different story with the British Government They claimed that their government was established by law and administered constitutionally A few years ago the C P (now Madhya Pradesh) Government was faced with the controversy of the proprietary rights over the land and wanted to ascertain the sense of the Hindu Dharma Śāstra on this point The conclusion, viz that the Government was the sole proprietor of the land, need cause no surprise For it was an interested judgment The Nuzool Department starts with a presupposition that all sorts of rights of ownership over land vest with government and if any other party chooses to lay any claim to it the onus of proving the same lies with that party In the absence of adequate proof or any other instrument of convincing the authorities, it is a forgone conclusion that government has all the rights, even though that party may

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\* The whole error is due to ignorance of the distinction between a cultural history and a history of events The canons for the study of each must be different In the study of cultural history differences of age and language do not matter much

be in actual enjoyment for generations together. This instrument was usually employed in the case of lands other than fields, gardens, plantations, and houses on which direct tax was paid to Government. The voluminous research resulting from the labours of Occidental scholars belongs to a similar category. If a person has to say that a certain thing existed and was of a certain type in the Rgvedic period or is contained in the Rgveda, he has to prove it with adequate evidence to the satisfaction of these Rgvedic scholars. Unless and until this is done, the pet notion of Occidental scholars in the field of Vedic research will be taken for granted. In the course of the continuous flow of the current of Vedic culture for millenia together, ebb and flow, transparency and muddiness, eddies and whirlpools are likely to be found in the very nature of things; yet it cannot be denied that the main current has ever continued to flow through its accustomed bed all these years. Even the tradition of astronomical calculations takes us back to the extent of eight millenia. Even minute observances like sipping of a half teaspoonful of water with the sacred mantra before and after the meal have persisted continuously for four millenia, as testified by the Chhāndogya Upanisad. If there are variations in some aspects there is a method in them which is consistently borne out. In the light of these circumstances, the adoption of the Nuzool Department policy by this modern science of research is the height of absurdity. It is difficult to say if we should regard it as resulting from the pride of a conquering nation or is the inevitable result of the limitations of western insight and experience. If at all, the Nuzool Department policy is to be adopted it should be adopted by indigenous research scholars in order to establish that several traditions of long standing, in actual observance today and reflected through literature for millenia, were absent in the Rgvedic times. There is no convincing ground, apart from the complacent prejudices of

Occidental researchers who are incapable of thinking that the whole creation came into being much earlier than 6,000 years ago<sup>1</sup> Hence, if a person has to prove that a particular thing did not exist in Rgvedic times, it ought to be his responsibility to put forth adequate evidence for it and not merely build castles on the shifting quicksands of non-mention in Vedic literature.

In the research work done by European scholars undue stress is laid on philology. While there is no doubt that philology is a valuable accessory to research, it is not proper to give it an undue place, as Europeans themselves have begun to realize<sup>2</sup> Says Keith, "All the Indo-European languages have certain special points in which they agree with one another of the group and to deduce racial mixture and migration from these facts is quite impossible." It may be said in addition that a little difference in language and style does not necessarily prove difference in date. Take an instance from Marathi literature, Shri Jñāneshwara and Mukunda Rāj are contemporaries and yet there is a world of difference in their language. Even in the works by one and the same writer difference in territorial environment, circumstances in the writer's life, the age when he wrote a particular piece and the objects for which he wrote it, may cause considerable differences and if an author is sufficiently long-lived they might ensue a discernible change even in language and style at different stages. Minor inconsistencies in a work do not necessarily lead to the conclusion that they are interpolations and hence, to the conclusion that different parts of the work belong to different periods. In a recent biography of Shivaji's mother written

\* "You are fully aware of the mischief that is produced by employing the terminology of comparative philology in an ethnic sense I have uttered the same warning again and again

In my later works, too, I have protested as strongly as I could against the unholy alliance of these two sciences comparative Philology and Ethnology"

—Chips from a German Workshop,

by the chief minister of a state in India, and published recently as many as three dates for the crucial meeting of Shuvaji and his adversary Afzulkhan, are mentioned at different pages! If we were to infer interpolations and differences in date from these acts of oversight or inattention it would obviously be far from truth. It is easy to see how, in the ancient age, when writing was continued for years together without any such facilities for publication, and when there was a tendency not to score out what was written, out of an implicit faith in divine inspiration, minor inconsistencies and defects of language and slips of the pen might very naturally occur. Just as it is a vain attempt to infer an identification of dynasty from merely similarity in names, it is equally unreliable to infer dates merely on the problematic evidence of philology.

Again it must be remembered that philology as it has developed today is not a perfect science. The late Brahmarishi Annā Sahib Patwardhan\* used to mention a criterion for distinguishing Vedic language from the non-Vedic. The Vedic language does not at all have the half vowels (अर्धस्वर) as pronounced in English words like 'but', 'put' 'can', or 'ought'. He also used to mention another rule regarding the formation of words. It was that, when persons speaking two different languages deal with each other, words indicating the same ideas in their own languages combine together to form independent words and such words usually connote articles of everyday use, verbs or primary emotions. In the process of the formation of such words some letters are eluded, some are transposed and some undergo a transformation. (Vide 'Brahmarshi's Gospel'.) Those points suggested by him also merit consideration. The Samskr̥t language has remained pure up to date and hence such hybrid words are amply found in languages other than Samskr̥t and derived from Samskr̥t. The proportion of such words is much greater when one

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\* The author of 'Brahmarshi's Gospel' whom Lokmānya Tilak used to revere as his Guru.

of the languages is Samskr̥t than when both of them are non-Samskr̥t languages. This makes for a conclusion viz., that Samskr̥t-speaking people must have at some time or the other, spread to different parts of the globe. One need not again emphasise how valuable this fact is to the determination of chronology and re-building of history.

In the above-mentioned work, namely 'Brahmarshi's Gospel' several examples of such words have been cited even from the Marathi language - such words have crept in and fortunately they have both their elements intact. If the art of printing had not been known these elements might have been elided and new words coined in their places. Since the Muslim rulers of India were more concerned with war and governance than with cultural life, such words abound in the former context e.g. 'Rao Sahib', 'Jawan Mard', 'Vir Bahadur' 'Kagad Patr', 'Hirvegar' are only too familiar. If philologists carry on further investigation they would easily lay their hands on several other specimens of this kind.

European researchers have committed similar feats in ethnology, folklore, geology, archaeology, which phenomenal labours cannot but command our admiration and yet it has to be admitted that even their valour has run into a cul de sac in the field of the study of Vedic culture and the determination of chronology. Their conclusions in these various sciences are not final and decisive even in their own respective spheres. They are originally founded on certain notions and hence, as pointed out by Sister Niveditā in the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, we have to deal more with a cumulative drift of opinion than with established facts. One person puts forth an idea as a mere hypothesis, another proceeds on it as if it were an established fact and utilizes it as a basis for further investigation. Thus it is a case of the blind leading the blind. Even the idea of examining the very basic notions never occurs to them. Quite a large number of

such towers of sand built by such research abound in the field of these sciences. For instance, some one comes across the picture of a hermitage; another imagines it to be Kanwa's hermitage. The picture is quite likely to bear a different interpretation and there is no decisive criterion why all should be ruled out to the exclusion of one. It is a psychological fact that one can make people believe a thing, if one says it long enough, loud enough and often enough. Those who specialise in this art can foist on the reader their pet notions as established truths. This is not to say that I wish to ridicule the science of research or that I have no proper appreciation of its use and value. The very writing of this book cannot be continued without its help and yet it has to be pointed out that, on account of the undue importance attached to its pet prejudices, we have altogether been misled to the point of madness. If the science of research had been one of the branches of science meant for the intellectual edification of the leisurely people I might as well have let it alone; but in India's present pitiable plight interested propagandists, actuated by different narrow aims, have, under the name of national well-being, exploited it to such an extent as totally to pervert popular notions which defy description. The people at large have totally forgotten their real self. Like the cub of a lion described in a popular Vedāntic allegory, which was brought up among a flock of sheep and had started bleating instead of roaring, the average Indian is devoured by an inferiority complex.\* It has, therefore, become imperative for me to subject this science of research to a seemingly relentless criticism. I may not be adequately qualified for the task. It is in fact a task for erudite scholars with life-long study.

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\* It may be pointed out that these words were written about a quarter of a century ago. The condition has even now hardly changed.

and it would indeed repay a whole life's labour as it would render solid national service at this critical juncture

Next in importance to philology are the sciences of Anthropology and Archaeology, but for the purpose of determining several points in the research into Vedic culture even these means are not sufficiently reliable by themselves All these sciences could at best corroborate a conclusion in Vedic chronology if it is otherwise established The reason why their importance has been over-estimated is that the mistaken notions at their base are not easy to detect For instance, these sciences postulate that in early times there invariably resided people of a uniform mode of living and thought in a specific part of the globe This thesis will largely be found to be true if we except India It is generally true that people inhabiting one and the same place are culturally homogeneous, but, it is not equally true that they are ethnologically so For instance, even among the English people, there are many ethnical variations evinced by structural differences in an Englishman's body We cannot, therefore, conclude that they belong to different cultures altogether nor can we infer conversely that ethnic homogeneity entails cultural homogeneity Christians and Muslims, for instance, invaded other countries and converted the inhabitants to their own religion and culture The result was that peoples with two different cultures, but born of the same race lived side by side Even so is the case of archaeology It can at the most prove intercourse on a large scale between two different human groups but it cannot equally definitely prove ethnic precedence nor can it prove that one was prior or superior to another Even from the point of view of determination of chronology it does not render more help than suffices for a general concept of time From the point of anthropology critical scholars studying the ancient period generally bank on the frameworks of bones excavated in various places, pieces of skulls, unearthed statues or pictures It must first be remembered that these relics are

found on a microscopic scale, considering the long antiquity with which we are concerned. Imagine what would happen 5,000 years hence if similar remains of the Indian people today were to be excavated. They would undoubtedly exhibit several types of skeletons, but it would certainly not justify a generalisation that people of this generation belonged to different races or that they migrated to India at different stages of History. Similarly, if it is found that people in Egypt or Central Asia largely belong to Muslim culture, it would not justify a conclusion that all those people belonged to one particular race. In fact, those researches lead nowhere if they are not augmented by the false notion of Aryan invasion of India. Even today, people in South India, belonging to what European research characterises as the Dravidian race, are close followers of Vedic culture. If it is established on independent evidence that even in ancient times there was a Dravidian race in India, on what grounds can it be said that those people did not belong to the Vedic culture? If the early existence of Vedic culture is thus proved, on what grounds could it be supposed that the Aryans came from outside? The comprehensive and accomodating character of Vedic culture is a patent fact and certain traits which we find continuously persisting in India for over two millenia cannot be dogmatically asserted to have been absent before, unless we fall a prey to prejudice and a false sense of prestige. All that I wish to say is that these assumptions do not necessarily lead to unproved propositions—that the development of Vedic culture did not take place in India, that its progenitors, termed Aryans by Occidental scholars—only immigrated from outside, and that it was only after their immigration that the Rgveda was composed.

Those who would wish to prove their statements with the help of all the above mentioned sciences, have to postulate one thing, viz., that two to four millenia B.C. India was not the seat of a homogeneous culture.

and whatever culture it represented was the primitive stage of humanity. Even this postulate has no adequate basis. It is built up on the sole foundation of tentative suggestions conveniently adopted for their study by earlier scholars. Take, for instance, Summilian and Chaldean cultures. Even the experts on Chaldean culture in their major works express their own doubts about the veracity of royal dynasties (Vide Enclyopaedia Britannica). But the age of Sargan, viz., 4,000 B C, which is based on conjectures forms the authentic (?) basis of further history writing. Even in Chaldean literature itself these dynasties have no more basis beyond hearsay stories. Nobbonidas found it written somewhere that Sargan flourished 4,000 years back. This was considered sufficient basis for history which was regarded as authentic by all subsequent writers. Is it not strange, that in the face of this the age of the Mahāhhārata war whrh our sacred works place five millenia back is unceremoniously discredited? Summilian Idiography may connote a meaning, but not a correct phonetic sense, as the article in the Encyclopaedia Britannica points out, "It must be remembered that the reading of most of the early Summilian proper names is merely provisional, as we do not know how the idiographs of which they are composed were pronounced in either Summilian or Assyrian". While western scholarship itself is so sceptical, Indian scholars like Prānanāth have built magnificent edifices on the doubtful foundation of such pronunciation and even arrived at brilliant conclusions that the Summilian people used to recite Vedic Hymns?

In the field of research in this country the labours of Ketkar, the General Editor of the Encylopaedia of Maharashtra deserve admiration. Whether knowingly or unknowingly he has taken a few steps in advance, and those too, in the right direction. I have said 'unknowingly' because, even after reaching a conclusion that there is plentiful evidence to show that hereditary Brahminhood had come to be established

as early as the Mantra Period, he has again taken a somersault and said that the Varna Institution did not exist at that time. I do not wish to dilate more on this point here as it will form the subject of an independent discussion at a later stage. Ketkar, after a study of the Vedas, draws the conclusion that "we are inclined to the conclusion that religion of the common man in the Vedic age was exactly the same as it is today." (Marathi Encyclopaedia, Vol. IV, page 473). He really deserves congratulations on making so much progress through his research. What he means is that the religion of the common man was the same then as it is now. What he implies is that the religion of special classes in society was not the same as that of the common man and is not so even now. But the religion of the common man today, though it differs from that of special classes in outward form, is yet in principle homogeneous with it; and there is no reason why it could not have been so even at that age. But such a robust conclusion is too much for his intellect to bear and this is why even from this advanced stage he retreats to confusions, e. g. that the culture of the Mantra Period was different from that of Soota, that there was no love lost between them and that Upanishadic literature was the creation of the Soota culture. The main reason responsible for this confusion is that he has missed the following essential points. Under the aegis of a perfect culture, different phases subsumed by one and the same principle continue coming up and going down; they can consistently have their sway at one and the same time, it is not at all necessary to presuppose different periods, heterogeneous independent cultures and various human races in order to explain them. Even in present-day society the 16 sacraments (*samskāras*), the study of the Vedas, the various paths like Yoga, Pauranic religion and such other alternatives, specially suited to the different strata in society, can and do simultaneously command acceptance from the respective strata, without in any way giving up their

imperfections. He thinks likewise, that such a state of affairs was impossible in the Vedic age. The patent result is confusion worse confounded. As already pointed out, with the illustration of the Nuzool Department, European scholars, throwing to the winds all traditions, have merely on the strength of non-mention, established(?) their favourite thesis that five millenia back the whole world was culturally in a stage of infancy and India, of all countries, was peopled by primitive savages, fighting each other with the most primitive weapon of elephant tusks. It is at least fortunate that the learned savant has himself admitted that, at the time of the battle of ten princes, India was inhabited by highly cultured people and if at all there was an invasion, it was by people of own culture.

Let alone this confusion, there is no doubt that his other inferences, viz., that Soota literature is as old as the R̄gveda, that the institution of Brāhmaṇahood had even then been established and that the culture of the common people has ever since remained continuously homogeneous. Equally important is his research that the term "Ārya" does not connote a race. Nowadays, there is a trait to misinterpret the term Arya as racial and to exploit the verse कृष्णतो विश्वार्थम् (rendering the whole world Ārya)\* for propaganda. Howsoever admirable it may be from the point of view of certain other ideals, the fact is that it has no basis in Vedic texts and is therefore, to say the least, untrue and misleading.

Dr. Ketkar has pronounced Soota literature as ancient but has not realized the full responsibility for this pronouncement. Even, he accepts that Soota literature does not consist of mere description of royal dynasties; and that it had reached the zenith of Upanisadic philosophy which is the crown of human philosophies up to date. He, likewise, says that Soota

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\* If the term Ārya in this verse connotes race what about the word 'Satyam' in the verse कृष्णतो विश्व सत्यम्? (rendering the whole world true)

culture was an independent culture. Any culture has within it several trends of human beliefs and traditions. It is an obvious fact that the Purāṇas primarily intended to preserve the Soota literature. While accepting all these facts he has altogether omitted the cosmology of the Purāṇas (Cosmology means much more than mere geography). Really speaking after giving so much value to Pauranic literature he should have laid down some canons, from the point of view of research, deciding which portions of this literature should be accepted and which rejected and in what proportion and why. Had he noticed this thing he would easily have grasped the seminal truth, that European notions—e. g that the period of compilation of the Samhitas was the period of the decline and disappearance of the sacrificial institution and that the period of the Upanisads was altogether different from the period of ritualism—were based on ignorance. He would also have seen that there can be such a thing as perfected culture, and that the Vedic culture was such a culture. He would also have noticed that the European notions mentioned above have resulted from an ignorance of these fundamental truths.

Another minor fact must also be borne in mind. Personal names in Rgvedic and other parts of Samskṛt literature are usually ambiguous, i. e., there is no means to ascertain whether they are the names of families or of individuals. In most cases there is a confusion underlying them. It is necessary to formulate a certain method for resolving this confusion. The method adopted by the modern scholar is that he utilises it according to his own convenience, to suit his pet theories and there seems a method even in this madness. The very occurrence of a personal name is enough proof for him to support his theory. An example has already been cited above. Dr. Ketkar wanted to step into the shoes of his European predecessors in determining the age of Rgveda. He therefore picked up Sudāsa. He next identified this Sudāsa with the

Sudāsa of the Rgveda. He did not even pay attention to the fact that, in a work like the Rgveda consisting of miscellaneous hymns, the name might connote other persons as well. Yet another aspect of this so called 'science' is that when a thing is told about two persons it is invariably taken as connoting not persons but a community or society and is made the basis of historical conclusions. Take for instance the struggle of Vaiśampāyana and Yājñavalkya. Elaborate histories have been cooked up from this quarrel regarding Āryas and non-Āryas, white Āryas and black or coloured Āryas and their mixed progeny—as if individual references in history are never made without major communal or ethnic import and as if major historical incidents do not occur without communal or racial causes (i.e. through individual relations). Among the Brāhmaṇas of Poona two factions, namely black and white\* arose as a result of "a storm in a tea cup" following an act of mischief by one Gopalrao Joshi. Most of the persons involved were Konkanasthas Lakamānya Tilak was known to be included among the black group All this account has been traditionally included in chronicles of the period but it is obvious that all these documents may not remain, at any rate, in a complete form, after the lapse of a thousand years If a research scholar coming at the end of the millennium were to conclude that this quarrel was an ethnological one and that Konkanasthas with white skin and defective eyes, coming into contact on the plains with Deshasthas with a dark complexion led to a mixed progeny, that Lokamanya Tilak belonged to the black group, i.e. through hybrid breeding, as may be supported by the evidence that he was black in complexion and never put on glasses, it is for the

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\* This point can be amply illustrated with instances from history In the course of a battle, in the province of Kashgar two factions of one and the same community were called black and white "The opposing Tartars of the same race were called the white and black mountaineers" (*Kashgaria* by Kropotkin, p 102)

reader to imagine what extent of veracity and depth of scholarship this sort of research should command.

Thus, it seems to have tacitly been taken for granted that even the slightest difference in text is traced back to (supposed) difference in the age or a difference in the society in which the literature was written. It seems to be a foregone conclusion, that it is impossible, that there can be different popular notions about the same subject at the same time. One is surprised, for instance, to find a number of contemporaneous references of various types about the killing of Afzal Khan by Shivaji. Even among the Marathi writers there is no unanimity, let alone the versions of foreign historians who are avowedly prejudiced. This results from the varying abilities of writers concerned. But the modern science of research is cocksure that there simply could not have been such variations in the capacities of ancient writers, and hence rushes to the ready conclusion that any difference in the account of an event must needs be traced to a difference in age, if both the references appear in the same work. Most of the earlier works are not exactly contemporaneous with the events they describe but have most probably been compiled at a subsequent stage. It is very natural that they should give different accounts of the bygone events. Neither writers nor readers of these times had such unquestioning faith "in the science of history" as our contemporaries have and we cannot expect allusions to past events in these works to be so unambiguously and systematically arranged as we may have, for instance, in a modern biography of Shivaji.

One more trait of the modern science of research may be borne in mind. On the one hand, it imagines the Rgveda to reflect the infancy of humanity, but on the other hand, it takes for granted that all the writers of this period followed a particular system according to which the method of writing on different subjects had been determined; it further takes for granted that this method ever remained unchanged.

and unimproved while in all other matters human society underwent transitions. It, moreover, takes for granted, absurdly enough, that people have, in spite of their knowledge of this conventional method of writing, used this literature with superhuman reverence as it were. The irony is that this science of research attempts to spotlight from the body of ancient literature those reforms which are either being carried on or are expected to be introduced in our own day. The modern researchers should, however, remember that if certain things were familiar to ancient people and were not unusual and objectionable to them, they need not have been taken aback at them, yet all such references and allusions are invariably indirect and remarkably few and far between. Moreover, the current-day researcher entirely forgets the make-up of the ancient writer's mind and his outlook on life. It is in a great measure likely to have been different from his own. If the present-day researcher, regarding himself as intellectually advanced, can yet allow any amount of disjointedness and inconsistencies to creep into his work, how does he expect ancient writers to singularly free from any such flaw? Why does he not exercise the generosity to allow a little margin for human error in interpreting their works and drawing conclusions from them? But, unfortunately, the fact is that the critic and the modern research scholar have combined, as it were, relentlessly, to direct their weapons against the ancient works even more regardless of all propriety and commonsense than in the case of a pugnacious advocate solely bent on proving a certain document in a civil court to be counterfeit. Take for instance the writings of an eminent Marathi researcher, the late V. K. Rajwade. He seems to be wedded to the faith that all transitions in society take place as a result of promiscuity\*. It is likely that the

\* His series of articles on 'marriage' in the *Chitranya Jagat* and his introduction to "Rādhāmādhavavilāsachampu" would repay perusal from this point of view.

hypothesis of modern scientists about the primitive stages of man may be true. Human society might have been in a barbarous stage. It may have been divided into several races. They might have undergone several metamorphoses and admixtures. They might have immigrated into India or emigrated from here. They might not have had any marriage institution altogether, or might have had one which was loose and marred by promiscuity; they might have worshipped stones or might have run away for life, like timid savages, merely at the sight of natural phenomena which they were accustomed to observe right through their life and under which they had grown. The real controversy does not lie there. The crux of the whole problem is whether humanity was in such a stage in the age of the Rgveda and whether there were the slightest traces of such a stage in Rgvedic literature. It is my humble submission that Rgvedic literature does not yield any such conclusion. On the contrary the culture reflected in this literature is of a highly advanced type. Several writers today acknowledge this fact as they have to; but while studying this literature they conveniently forget that the attitude and the point of view of the authors of this literature must, of necessity, have been highly sublime, consistent and respectful with such a stage of culture. This is why the modern researcher takes his wonted liberty of analysing and explaining anything in the Rgveda as a metaphor after his own imagination. The same is true of Rajwade's views on the marriage institution. Take for instance the hymn containing a conversation between Yama and Yami\*. The only conclusion, it can yield, is that in Rgvedic society even a marriage between brother and sister was deemed reprehensible, not to speak of a casual sex relation between them. But the researcher reaches an exactly opposite conclusion viz. that it indicates marriages between brother and sister in Rgvedic

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\* S. १० - १० - ५.

secret. The perfect circle in the verse ७-१२-४ suffices it extremely important and clearly shows that while Yama was inclined to revolt against tradition out of a useful knowledge, Yama was earnestly explaining to her the right course of conduct. If the case was otherwise, that is, if Yama's suggestion was in keeping with the contemporary tradition and if reformed Yama did not rebuke it, there was no occasion for a perfect truth I should join you as a wife does a husband तत्त्वं च विद्यते "as a wife to a husband". She could surely have said "I wish to be your wife" In a perfect code the objects of comparison must necessarily be different from the standards of comparison, every student of rhetoric knows very well.

After this little digression let me come to the main point. The methods of inference which a writer like Rayado has adopted in giving full rein to his profligate inventive intellect are amazing indeed! In order to show that in primitive times even the sex act was performed in the open, he has taken the nineteenth century instance of Ranjit Singh Granting that Ranjit Singh used to join his concubine on elephant back in the midst of a crowd, it does not imply that he used to remove all the curtains of the *Londal* and assuming that such a reference was unearthened (thanks to ridiculous efforts of untiring scholars') it would at most be an exceptional case and could not be exploited to malign nineteenth century manners and morals, whatever the writer thinks about them. The same is true of his writing about unnatural offences. He has based his damaging inferences on the anecdote of the sage Kindama and the Puranic story of the Sun and Vadavā. If these unnatural offences with animals are to be taken literally, why should we discredit the latter part of the story that the mare (Vadavā) begot from the sun human progeny? Would it not lead to a further conclusion that in that age, at any rate, animals used to beget human children? Is there any convincing

answer to treat the one as true and the other as false ?

Generally speaking, human nature from the beginning of the human race to the present day has exhibited all kinds of tendencies but it is entirely wrong to regard all of them as socially and conventionally approved. Shelley refers to incest in the course of his poem. Should anybody, therefore, conclude that sex relations between brother and sister had received social sanction in his time ? Different types of promiscuity are likely to be found even in the purest of human groups. So might they have been in the Brâhma society. Does it therefore warrant the conclusion that they were traditionally approved and socially sanctioned ? Even so is the case of unnatural actions. They may at best be explained as expressions of an aspect of human nature; but to go beyond this and rush to generalise and universalise—and from such generalisations jump to specific conclusions—is nothing but an abuse of the logical faculty. One more fact, here, may again be emphasised Any civilized society from the earliest to the latest stage cannot be regarded as made up of one single stratum. It has naturally consisted of various grades and shades and stages of progress and of persons at different stages of adolescence, whether it had developed a well-knit Varna system or not Hence it is highly improper to draw a sweeping generalisation about a society on the slightest support of stray incident mentioned in literature.

In the modern science of research comparative mythology, geology, mineralogy, etc., have also their own place and these sciences might prove helpful if we remember their proper nature and limits Of these, comparative mythology cannot yield any definite conclusion. It can, at the most, conclude that people among whom similar mythology existed were connected with one another in some manner; but nothing definite can be indicated regarding this manner. For

instances, the decimal system and algebra are found both in Europe and India because Indians taught these sciences to Europeans long before modern India came in touch with Modern Europe. The same may be said about medicine and other sciences. For, India taught these sciences not directly but through the intermediary of a third people (the Arabs). Similarly, words and mythological stories are likely to change place without any direct contact among people residing in different places. There is no gainsaying the fact, however, that the two societies were culturally connected. Even more helpful than words and mythological stories are other traits like customs and manners, religious<sup>1</sup> concepts and practices, which should go to establish more important and direct communication. As for geology and biology, they would no doubt help this research to some extent but we must remember that these sciences have not yet reached a definite form in any sense. Most of the so-called conclusions, arrived at after studying thousands of instances, and writing voluminous books of thousands of pages, are but tentative suggestions of the author, and particularly with reference to determination of chronology they exhibit such a bewildering confusion that no sane-minded person would harness them to his evidence. Take, for instance, the celebrated instance of the snowstorm which led to the so-called Āryan migration. Assuming that there was a snowstorm, when did it take place? One scholar places it at 10,000 years back, another at 80,000 years ago. The late Lokamanya Tilak did not bother about deciding the age, but chose the former as it was more favourable. The main reason why the theory of the late Mr Pawagi\* or that of Dr A C Das, does not command conviction is that they have largely relied on these unauthentic 'sciences'. Even experts in these sciences modestly confess that in spite of a minute

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\* A Marathi writer whose thesis was that the Āryas went to the Arctic region from Indian Home.

study, they are so patently ignorant of even important facts that they cannot positively state any definite principles or conclusions. The article on geology in the Encyclopaedia Britannica is sufficient to bear out this truth. The farther back we go, the greater is this conclusion. Even if two research scholars differ about the date of a certain problematic event, for instance, that there was an ocean in a particular place, the difference between the dates given by them ranges over millions of years. This is not scientific, to say the least, as keen students even of those sciences admit. And yet our ill-baked scholars believe in the inferences even more implicitly than the poor traditional Vedic pandit believed in his scriptures. They rush to writing histories on the basis of these uncertain grounds. It is obvious, therefore, that any means other than reliable literature, is more or less subject to uncertainties, and even as regards such literature, that the scholar will have to frame his own canons of research in using it as his source.

The basic axiom of Occidental scholars is that a person best fitted to study a culture is one external to that culture, for he is singularly free from all kinds of prejudices. They hold that it is not possible for a person belonging to that culture, and hence proud of it, to assess its value quite impartially. Macdonell maintains that it is particularly difficult for an orthodox Brāhmaṇa to hold the balance even in judging his own culture. Says he, "The sole aim here being the attainment of truth, it is a positive advantage that the translators of ancient sacred books should be outsiders rather than the native custodians of such writing. The latter could not escape religious bias, an orthodox Brāhmaṇa could not possibly do so".\* If this statement of Macdonnel is to be taken as a standard canon, its application need not be confined to the Hindus. It would apply with equal

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\* Commemoration Volume Bhāndārkar Institute.

force to any nation studying their own culture It is, on the contrary, a fact—though most unfortunately so—that at least today none could hardly compete with a Hindu with a petrified heart in studying his own culture without any cordiality for the literature whatsoever! This apart, Macdonnel's statement is characterized by a great defect Merely because a person is a foreigner he need not be free from prejudice This has amply been borne out by the deep-rooted prejudices of Occidental scholars frequently alluded to in this and the preceding two chapters Macdonnel says that we cannot afford to rely on Sāyanāchārya in the study of the Rgveda But Swami Vivekananda says that Occidental scholars have almost no insight into the subject and that a traditional commentator like Sāyanāchārya should be adhered to Leaving alone these two extremes, it is necessary and proper to adopt a *via media* and such a *via media* has been hinted at by both the above-named persons Swami Vivekananda asks us to decide any point with reference to the known traditions of Vedic sages Even if one does not accept the Swami's method it is but reasonable to admit that the opposite extreme of sticking only to the lexicon, to the utter disregard of all traditions and to the exclusion of all commentaries, *owned by Europeans*, is not proper Even Mcdonnel has accidentally dropped a hint on this point though without knowing it "As regards its more peculiar and difficult portions it (the Rgveda) must therefore be interpreted mainly through itself" Though he himself laid down this canon he was unable to realize its underlying implication on account of his prejudices It has been indicated above how the Rgveda has to be interpreted mainly through itself Let us now conclude this chapter after noting two important points which should be borne in mind while studying the Rgveda

The student of the Rgveda must first bear in mind that the Rgvedic hymns contain something more

than poetry, namely, intense feeling. Ketkar says in the Marathi Encyclopaedia that the Rgvedic hymns do not evince intense emotionality of the Biblical psalms; but it appears to me to be the view of some Occidental scholar. If it is Ketkar's own view, then the only inference is that he was temperamentally incapable of appreciating the intense feeling in the Vedic hymns. Shri Baba Saheb Patwardhan, the Editor of the 'Shruti Bodha', (A Marathi translation of Rgveda) who spent days and nights together in constant meditation on the Rgveda, feels that intense devotionality is the *sine qua non* of the Rgveda, which he compares with the celebrated abhangas of Tukaram.\* After citing several illustrations of such devotionality he asks, "is it possible to find a more sincere expression of the yearning of the heart anywhere else?" He says from his own experience that the description of the powers of the Gods in the Rgveda thrills our hearts. It is worthwhile remembering that this is the experience of a modern Western-educated Indian who caricatured followers of the Bhakti Marga (devotional sect) as lame, crippled and mad. Is such an intense emotionality possible unless the authors of the hymns had a living faith and realisation as regards the celestiality and supra-materiality of the deities which formed the subject of his own devotion? The faith that the Rgvedic hymns have the power of mantra (charm) and are capable of bringing about marvellous effects is expressed in the body of the Rgveda itself. It is clearly stated for instance, that Sudāsa's horse crossed the waters of the Parusni and reached the yonder shore by the power of Viśwāmitra's hymns. In fine, the authors of the Rgvedic hymns felt for their respective deities in no way less than a modern saint or mystic like Tukārām or Shri Rāmkṛṣṇa Paramahansa. This feeling

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\* Introduction to Mandalas 8 and 9 of his Marathi translation of the Rgveda, p 13.

is not marred by the occasional conclusion of a mundane event in the course of their descriptions Maxmuller's pet theory that the deities of man were created through several stages like nature-worship and ancestor-worship may be right or wrong, but one thing is clear, namely, that whatever the earlier and primitive stage through which man might have passed, the people at the time of the Rgvedic hymns had by far crossed all these preparatory stages It is particularly necessary to point out this thing, in order to bring out the one-sidedness of the views of those who visualize allegories, whether astronomical or naturalistic, whenever and wherever they choose, in the Rgveda, and also to point out that there is a technique and limit to the mystification of deities as the poets are said to be fond in the Brāhmaṇa works. Similar allegories again occur in the course of Samskr̥t and Marathi literature in the descriptions of deities but a peculiarity about these descriptions is that they always leave unimpaired their divine character, or rather they re-emphasise the same In other words, the deities precede the allegories, or conversely, the allegories are later creations We, too, while unravelling these allegories must take care not to affect either the divine character or the patent priority of the deities or else it will be a travesty of truth It is no logic but a fantastic play of the intellect to jump to the conclusion that it is an allegory as soon as a passing resemblance with astronomical phenomena is discerned It is still more fantastic to analyse (or rather electrolyse) such allegories in all their minute details Most of the inferences barring a few direct references like that to the Kṛtikās in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa fall under this category It has already been shown above how the notion of the allegory on the sleep of the Ribhus lands us in a logical inconsistency.

One more thing has to be remembered while deciding matters of chronology merely on the basis

of proper nouns and references to Gods and Rsis in particular. Such references are not to be interpreted according to our feelings but according to the feelings of the people of those times. Or, if they cannot be so interpreted they should be left alone as unreliable evidence, or else, it wold amount to rejecting the erstwhile sentiments of those people while using the same as pieces of evidence. It would resemble the ridiculous interpretation of the fool's gestures by the pandit in the celebrated story. When the pandit raised one finger, connoting that there is one Godhead, the fool understood it to mean that it was a threat to pierce through one of his eyes, and when he counters it by raising two fingers, the pandit in his turn interpreted it as a convincing argument that the ultimate reality is not one but two, viz. Brahma and Mâyâ. The absurd thesis of the late Râjwâde referred to in earlier pages amply bears this out. Once it is fantastically interpreted that the sage Kindâna was copulating with a she-deer, another still more fantastically jumps to the conclusion that unnatural offences must be common; still another proceeds with the research that there might be a human race with the name Mrga (the Samskrât word for a deer); while a third one, with more fertile imagination and astronomical predilections, interprets the term 'Mrga' to connote a star and takes it to mean that a certain man, wandering with his wife in the forest, was tempted to join her at the rise of the Mrga star in the sky and probably collapsed; and concludes that the hymn might be an allegory on this episode. The less said about such "historical researches" the better. In spite of numerous references in the Rgveda to the sun and the moon, it is fantastically presumed that they do not specifically indicate the solar and lunar dynasties but are presumed to be only indirectly connoted by the names Vaśîṣṭha and Viśwâmitra. While it is true that it was the Brâhmaṇa works which started the tradition of such

allegorical descriptions we must remember that Brāhmaṇa works are not works on the science of history. The main principle in their science of cosmology is that the whole cosmos becomes manifest in three ways, namely, spiritual (*adhyātmika*), psychological (*adhidaivika*) and material (*ādhibhautika*) and that the process of manifestation does not reach completion until it has first passed through these threee stages. They evolved these allegories on the basis of the faith that everything in the ultra-material (*adhidaivika*) world must have its counterpart on the material (*ādhibhautika*) plane, and used these allegories in order to impress on the minds of the people the ultramaterial character of seemingly material things. They have conversely given ultra-material explanations of material events mainly with a view to bringing out how the Vedas were particularly devoted to the institution of the sacrifice as a joining link between the two planes. The writing of the Brāhmaṇa works has, therefore, a definite purpose underlying it, which in its own way is perfectly scientific. Hence to read history into every metaphor and to read a metaphor in every strange allusion, utterly ignoring the purpose and the underlying science indicated in the last sentence portends nothing but a jaundiced view and does very little credit to the research talent of the Occidental scholar.

In fine, if proper nouns are to be used as means for determining chronology, the sentiments of the people belonging to those times must also be taken into account. In the biography of Shree Samarth Rāmdās Swāmi there is an account that he had a vision of Shree Rāma or Gorakshanātha and the biography of Shree Rāmakrishṇa Paramahamsa tells us of the conversations he had with Buddha and Jesus Christ. Would it be consistent to argue that Shree Rāma and Shree Samartha Rāmdās Swāmi in the former case and Buddha and Shree Rāmakrishṇa Paramahamsa in the latter case, were contemporaries? Can we lightly brush aside the

faith of these great saints that all the above mentioned deities and spiritual celebrities are immortal and belong to celestial categories which enable them to deal with mortal being in every way? Can we merely confine ourselves to such mystical references to miracles and conveniently forget the vast body of sentiments which underlie and occasion such references? It may, at the most, appear to be amusing today but after the lapse of centuries and the battering influence of time present body of literature will be reduced to unrecognisably disconnected relics. They will be subjected to the same fantastic treatment which is meted out to Vedic literature today. Will the present research into Vedic literature be any more justified than such fantastic treatment given to present-day literature centuries hence?

Similarly, a serious student of the Rgveda must totally discard the baseless concept of a so-called invasion and colonisation. The Rgveda, no doubt, gives an account of the crossing of the Sindhu (Indus) and of a march towards the East; but if, on the other bank of the Indus, there was habitation of the Vedic people right up to Central Asia, such a description cannot be used to prove invasion. It is a wellknown fact in history that such a habitation had been there even at the time of Alexander the Great, not to speak of the Vedic times. It is at any rate beyond the range of controversy that it was there in Afghanistan. We must likewise discard the equally absurd notion that the Vedic Āryas were a primitive people in a nomadic stage and must bear in mind that they were far removed from a primitive stage which occasions absurd notions e. g. that a *Svasura* (father-in-law) is a person skilled in doctoring and stealing dogs (*śva*). Even if it is taken for granted that the Rgvedic hymns were composed in the Panjāb, it is too narrow a supposition that the knowledge of their authors was confined to that province only. Leaving aside, for the sake of argument, ambiguous words in the Rgveda like Sindhu and Arṇava even the popular ‘samudra’

occurs many times in the body of the Rgveda. There is a perspicuous description of sea-faring trade and sea voyages (though occurring rarely) and even this description cannot possibly refer to the problematic sea which is hypothetically located in Rajputana. Because the Rgveda itself abounds in the references to the illimitable expanse of the earth and the limits set thereto by God which cannot in any way be confined to the might-have-been Rajputana Sea.

#### NOTE 1

There is one peculiarity about allegorical descriptions Even granting that there is a natural human instinct to allegorise, the specific tendency to deal only allegorically with major events and scientific topics is seen in the Brähmana works alone. It is not found on such a scale in any other literature in the world Apart from one reason, already mentioned, there is another and more natural cause to explain this feature. It is that it was among the writers of the Brähmana literature alone that the art of writing first arose, and the tendency to incorporate their literature in written works first appeared. As the Rgvedic people had recognized the secret that there are variations among human beings not only in the construction of words but also in the articulation of sounds and as they had further recognized that there are two fundamental types of language, divine and human, and that it comes out in four distinct forms, all their important literature was orally preserved despite the fact that they had also invented the script and yet it was slowly reduced to writing This is amply borne out by the fact that till recently, when paper was not dirt cheap as it is today, writing was confined only to essential cases. Since writing was an arduous task and took up a long time there was a natural tendency to confine it to a few words When the art of writing was just in its infancy this tendency must naturally have been

prevalent on a much larger scale. Orally preserved literature is, as a rule, versified and prose abounds only in written literature. It, therefore, follows when the art of writing was used it must have been chiefly to incorporate prose. It is seen from extant sources that any alphabetical slip had its origin in pictographs. The art of writing had its rise in the art of painting which is instinctive to man. The sole purpose of the art of painting is to give an objectified expression to the deep-rooted sentiments and feelings in the human heart. It, therefore, makes clear that when the art of writing was first used the deep-rooted sentiments and feelings of the human heart as also the innermost ideas of the human mind were sought to be made effective through the vehicle of allegories. This is why the language and form of the Brāhmaṇa works stand out by themselves in Samskr̥t literature. It is not because it is a link between the Mantra culture and the Soota culture as misconceived by Ketkar, but because it is the first prose literature reduced to writing so far as the Samskr̥t language is concerned. It is even likely, that just as the original versified form of Kautilya's detailed Arthaśāstra was reduced to aphorisms for the convenience of the student, the present available Brāhmaṇa works might be a prose abstract of the original extensive works. It is during the period of such compilation that certain contemporary information, e. g. like the Kṛttikās always rising in the east, is likely to have been incorporated in them. There is adequate ground for such an inference. Upanisads like the Chandogya contain quotations from the Gāthās and even Brāhmaṇas like the Śatapatha do not claim originality or credit for introducing a new science, but purport to say that they are just systematizing the erstwhile sciences and removing any possible confusion in them, as compendium or a popular manual such as a recent work like Nirnaya Sindhu or Dharmasindhu would attempt. This is clear from the reference to the Kṛttikās alone. There was a mistaken and unfounded notion that as Kṛttikās

were wives of a sage whom they had abandoned, a person starting a ritual at the rise of the Krttikās would be bereaved of his wife. It is stated in the Brāhmaṇas that this notion is absolutely mistaken and was due to some cause. The statement of Ketkār that the Mantra literature and the Soota literature were the creations of different communities is also not correct. The love story of Purūravas and Urvashi, and the story that Indra cut all the three heads of Vishvarūpa, appearing in the Soota literature, are originally found in the Rgveda. And it is likely that the germs of several other mythical stories may still be found in it. Similarly Rgvedic philosophy and cosmology alone have been detailed and exemplified in Soota literature.

#### NOTE 2

Even Swāmi Vivekānanda has not advocated that the position of the commentators should be accepted *in toto*. After all Sāyaṇāchārya was a commentator. He has written on the basis of earlier works and the traditions and though he naturally commands the greatest value and authenticity he is not above error. On many occasions when there is a difference among commentators, or if the commentator is silent, a subsequent commentator interprets a text in a manner favourable to himself, especially if he has commented from a different angle. For instance, Sāyaṇāchārya, acting on the faith that the specific use of the Vedas is only for guidance for sacrifices and ritualistic rites, interprets even words like 'namas' and 'Ishas' as sacrificial material. It is possible that there are many other such instances in Sāyaṇāchārya's commentary. All that I mean to say is the European predilection to pick and choose from the lexicon the most favourable to their intended interpretations as the correct one, and in the absence of any such alternative to insist that the original must bear that interpretation, or further still, to pronounce Sāyaṇā's interpretation to be mistaken if it counters with their pet theories,

is not at all justified. If at all the interpretation offered by Sāyanāchārya is to be rejected, and a substitute interpretation offered it is most essential that the new interpretation must be consistent, at any rate not in contravention of the established tradition of the sciences of the Vedic people. To take a popular instance from classical Samskr̤t literature, it is open to a critic to suggest a more appealing interpretation of Kālidāsa and thus to supersede Mallinātha, the commentator, acknowledged on all hands. But such an interpretation must be within the permissible limits of the four corners of Samskr̤t language.

## FOUR

### THE 'BARBARISM' OF THE RGVEDIC ĀRYAS

In order to form a proper conception about the Rgveda and its age, one or two more points have to be considered, as most of the conclusions of the modern research scholars are based on them. The quintessence of these conclusions is that there was no hereditary four-Varna system in the Rgvedic Age, that the earlier inhabitants of India (prior to the advent of the so-called Aryans) had also immigrated into the country and that in effect barbaric India had nothing which she could call her own. Of these the four-Varna system will be considered in detail in the next chapter. In the present chapter I propose to consider and examine the other thesis. This would incidentally help to elucidate my discussion on the four-Varna system also. The latter idea mentioned above has wrought indirect effect especially on the younger generation in our country, viz., that whatever there is worthwhile seen in Indians has either come about by force of accident or through the influence of external circumstances, that there is nothing indigenous about it and that whatever element thereof appears indigenous, has no basis in principles. They glibly explain that in the primitive state of man humanity was divided into four branches which accidentally spread out in four different directions and after a casual growth in course of time again came together and that out of this combination arose all the human nations known during the last two or three millenia. They seem to compare it to

a few creepers sprouting from some seeds accidentally dropped on the soil, having a luxuriant growth in different directions in course of time, developing differently according to circumstances e. g. some creepers getting stunted under shade for want of sunshine; some others getting bent under the weight of flowers and fruits on account of a luxuriant growth through support; and some others, unfortunately, being reduced to a merely skeleton of dried and shorn branches for want of nourishment or being munched by birds and beasts. They further unconsciously feel that the welfare of the less developed human groups lies in getting coalesced with the more advanced ones from the original stock. The implicit reasoning is that since the latter groups are more advanced even after the lapse of so much time they must necessarily have the intrinsic merit in them. In this commonly and tacitly accepted line of thought, characterizing modern research, one great flaw has to be clearly marked. It takes the word 'progress', to stand for power, wealth and modern means of science only. It singularly excludes any consideration of human heart and the inner life of man. There is so much "method in this madness" that the average reader feels like Justice Woodroffe that all this research is probably actuated by a deep-laid political motive seeking methodically to attempt to prove the inferiority of Hindu culture. The above notions have been exploited in determining the stages in Vedic cultural chronology and have therefore to be subjected to a careful scrutiny.

Among the auxiliaries used in deciding Vedic Chronology are the frequently occurring Vedic terms like 'Dāsa', 'Dasyu', 'Asura', and the so-called similarities between the Vedic Culture on the one hand and the Iranian, Chaldean and Summerian on the other. Once it is established, howsoever arbitrarily, that the Rgveda contains the history of uncivilized people besides an account of the immigration of some civilized people, the way is naturally prepared for

speculation about the original home of these immigrants It is singularly remarkable that Occidental scholars getting stuck up for want of "adequate evidence" on small and sundry item (almost vying with Othello demanding an explanation from poor Desdemona for Iago's handkerchief, while threatening to strangle her) become extra-ordinarily liberal like the simple God Śankara (who would even give away his wife) while dealing with the history of peoples outside India In spite of the patent references in the Rgveda to horses, horse chariots, and horse sacrifices, these research scholars ('!) like their *mind-borns*—ponder over the 'problem' whether the Rgvedic people knew horse-riding—for alas! there is no direct reference to a horse being ridden—and again, in the face of reference to four braids of women they glibly conclude that the Āryans must have borrowed types of hair-dressing from the Dravidians! Thanks to the very direct and unquestionable reference to Indra riding a horse (Mandala 3, Hymn 49) they still need still more direct proofs! These very Occidental pandits most scurilously believe the account of dynasties which are called unreliable by the Encyclopaedia Britannica and conclude therefrom without any other proof whatsoever, that Sārgan must have flourished four millenia back What is more, they make it appear that the history of Chaldea has been based on first rate material and we, following in the footsteps of our masters, write the histories of our own people basing our conclusions on theirs Here we may note the peculiarities of Occidental scholars They were confined to their narrow grooves which they imagined to be the whole universe, until the portals of Oriental literature were thrown open to them. When once they were introduced to this paradise of Oriental lore, there dawned a new vision on their orb and, like a raw celibate who, coming out from a sequestered cloister into the outer wide world for the first time is fascinated to the extent of madness by the

first woman he comes across, they were maddened by whatever science came to their hands. Rawlinson got crazy after Iran and Chaldea; Rhys Davis, Vincent Smith and Edwin Arnold were dazzled by Buddha and Buddhism; Slater was enslaved by the Dravidians; Wadell, like his friends, by Sumnerian culture; some took to Egypt; and Indian scholars like Ketkar and Vaidya, not to lag behind in the race, ran after Persia (Like little George Washington trying out his newly presented axe on any tree that came his way, whatever material these people found, they exploited it and traced it back to their respective favourite subjects. Our celebrated scholars in Maharashtra are inordinately Iran-minded in this whole fray).

It is argued that people found by Rgvedic Āryans in India had also immigrated into India. There is no basis whatsoever for this statement except an argument from similars. They never imagine that people outside India who resemble Indians might have borrowed those things from Indians. There is no reason to reject such a view except that it is unpalatable to European egotism. Even among European scholars there are several who argue that erstwhile inhabitants of India characterized as Dravidians also belonged to the Caucasian stock. There are philologists who argue that the language of these people supposed to be independent must have been derived from Samskr. All these questions have to be independently discussed. I shall for the present confine my attention to the popular notions about the Iranians and Chaldeans. Among the supposed foreign origins of Vedic Culture there are two main trends. One regards it to be Egyptian and Assyrian while the other takes it to be Iranian. All the other non-Indian cultures, are now accepted as posterior to Vedic culture and, therefore, are not taken to be its origin in spite of casual resemblances here and there. There is, however, a concept of Indo-European Aryan Culture which we shall examine at a later stage. Persons like Dr. Hall,

though only a few, argue on the basis of the Mohenjo Daro finds, that India might well-nigh prove to be the cradle of the entire human culture, but the general trend is to believe that the Dravidians immigrated into India and the Aryans who followed, conquered them and colonized here. The natural effect of this concept on the chronologies is that if the Dravidian and Indus cultures are proved to be post-Egyptian and post-Sumerian the (so-called) Aryan invasion is naturally proved to be posterior; and since the Egyptian and Sumerian cultures cannot be carried back beyond 7,000 B. C. the whole show of Vedic culture has to be located within a narrow span of between three to four millenia. As pointed out by Winternitz, "Though astronomical arguments of Tilak and Jacobi did not succeed in proving what was to be proved.....indeed from the point of Indian history, nothing speaks against the assumption that Vedic literature extends back into the third millenary and ancient Indian culture to the fourth millenary." It will be clear from the discussion on the 'sleep of the Ribhus' in the foregoing chapter the dates established by astronomical calculations are not beyond dispute. But the Occidental scholar would not accept this patent uncertainty.

Among some of the welcome principles derived by Dr. Ketkar after churning the milky ocean of the Rgveda is that the notion developed by earlier writers that there were people called Dasyus, who had conquered India and whose conquest by the Aryans is contained in the Vedas, is baseless. He has pointed out that the word Dasyu is Indo-Iranian as it occurs in the Avesta. This will depend, however, on the question whether the Persians spread-out before their advent into India or afterwards. It should be noted that in the Zend the word 'dasyu' occurs in the sense of a district. The word Dasyu, however, occurring in the Rgveda does not, therefore denote a specific community nor does it therefore indicate an enemy of the Aryans.

As Ketkar has rightly pointed out from the Rgveda, the Dasyus are seen to be unbelievers in gods, not performing sacrificial rituals, swerving from their rites, devoted to other deities, especially stupidly praying any deities and either womanish or addicted to women. They are also characterised as being without noses. It does not mean with flat noses. From their prayer to Indra (Rgveda I. 51-8) both the Āryans and Dasyus seem to have similar bodies. This may lead to a guess that they connoted a specific human group, but certain epithets (मृशवाच्, विवाच्, द्रोषवाच्) may be taken to mean that in their language, nasals were conspicuous by absence. If Vedic Āryans were most proud of anything at all it was of their highly developed language. They looked down upon peoples who could not scientifically pronounce all the 63 letters of the alphabet. Dasyus, whatever people they were, could not utter all these letters of the alphabet. From a verse in the Rgveda (VIII, 70-11) saying that the mountain leads Dasyus towards death, it may appear that they were mountaineers. There are so many and varied references to Dasyus that it could not be taken to characterize an inimical tribe. Assuming that the notion of the Aryan invasion is reliable, it is quite likely that their opponents might have been of defective speech, swerving from the right conduct and not performing sacrifices. But in that case all other aspects of these people would have faded into the background leaving only the aspect of opposition in the forefront, and epithets showing enmity would have been used of persons who opposed the Āryans. In the absence of any such thing we have to conclude that the word 'dasyu' has a qualitative and not ethnical import. They were probably indigenous enemies, not belonging to a foreign stock but grown strangers through swerving from right actions. I shall consider, at a later stage what might have given rise to such indigenous enemies. Suffice it to say for the present that Ketkar's conclusion, that even at the time of the so-called Aryan invasion, India was inhabited

by Āryan people themselves is beyond the possibility of doubt.

The word 'asura' also frequently occurs in the Rgveda. In post-Rgvedic literature it is definitely connotative of a specific community. I am of the opinion that, it is nowhere used in the Rgveda, in the sense of a community, but, it seems that the bewildering variety of meanings borne by this word in the Rgveda has created a problem even in the mind of Sāyanāchārya. He is required to draw out of this word the meaning of 'a priest' (असौ विद्या प्रसेके करिमि ॥ I, 108, 6, I, 109-6) which corroborates this statement. The word 'विहृत्' in this verse is also extremely important. In the Avestā of the Parsis, the word 'asura' is used only in the sense of a major (or great) god. In the Rgveda, although this word is not used in the sense of a community, it is used in the sense of a great god and again, in the exactly contrary sense of a hater of god or a wicked type of beings. This word is also tagged on to the word 'ashura' of the Assyrians and harnessed to certain other conclusions. Hence let us consider this word alone. It is indeed a matter of surprise how in one and the same work, viz., the Rgveda, this word is used in such a variety of senses. In spite of several similarities between the Parsis and ourselves, they regarded merely the word 'asura' as God and, strangely enough, took the word 'deva' in a contemptible sense. In other words the other meaning of the word 'asura' came to be foisted on 'deva'. It is worthwhile investigating why it should have been so.

I have shown, in my Marathi book entitled "The reorganisation of Vedic Culture", after a careful consideration of this word, that in the Rgveda the initial prefix 'a' in several words indicates not the negative sense, but the sense of 'beyond'. Thus the word asura means beyond 'sur' (to rule) that is, "beyond all control", and so, the highest God It is used in the Rgveda mostly in this sense. Similarly even the word 'deva' in the Rgveda indicates

celestial power and the word 'adeva' has been used in a verse (VIII 85-9) in the sense "defying the power of God or regarding oneself greater than God." Pairs of words like 'sat' 'asat', 'diti' and 'aditi', 'tithi' and 'atithi', 'mati' and 'amati' belong to this very catagory. A little investigation might reveal even a few more of this kind. It is a great problem viz., what type of deity 'aditi' was. The late Lokmanya Tilak has shown with the help of an allegory that 'aditi' means the brighter half of the firmament. But, I do not find the idea acceptable. The cordiality which the authors of the hymns have for their deities cannot possibly be found with poets fond of allegories. These ideas might originally have been true, but they were certainly not so in the minds of the sages composing the Rgvedic hymns. It can easily be shown on the basis of the Rgveda, that they had a real reverence for the objects of their devotion. Hence the word 'aditi' must have meant "beyond diti". The etymological sense of the word 'diti' is obvious. If we take the word 'aditi' to mean the brighter half of the firmament as Lokmanya Tilak suggests, the word 'aditi' is inconsistent even with the etymological sense. Instead of saying that the word 'diti' was derived from 'aditi' it is more reasonable to suggest that the reverse was the case. It is an axiom of our sciences that intellect (ज्ञान) is of the nature of light. Those in whom this illuminated intellectual principle developed to its utmost fullness and the root of whose power and prowess lies in their intellect are the sons of 'diti', or in other words, Daityas. In this Vedic sense the non-Indian peoples of today who are at the zenith of materialistic prosperity may also be termed 'daityas'. The daityas had nowhere been contemptuously referred to like the Rāksasas or asuras. It is for this reason that they have on the contrary been applauded as precursors of devas (पूर्वदेवा:). The all-comprehensive primordial

principle which transcends the intellect or 'diti' has been called 'aditi'. From it arise the group Adityas whose power originates in 'intuition' which lies beyond the intellect and whose very existence is also to be located in principles beyond the reach of the intellect. Later mythology mentions 'diti' and 'aditi' as the two wives of one and the same sage Kāśyapa and also mentions their respective sons the daityas and the devas as brothers. It is obvious that there should be no love lost between them. The former viz., daityas were individualistic on account of the limited character of the intellect and did not look beyond their self interests, while the latter saw life whole and were devoted to corporate unity, on account of illimitable character of 'aditi'. This is a very logical and satisfactory explanation of the history of these two terms. The words 'sat' and 'asat' need not also cause confusion as regards their meaning. The highest principle manifested (in the universe) has often been characterized as 'sat' in the Upanisads while the unmanifested ultra-qualitative principle has been termed 'asat'. The same is true with the word 'atithi'. The original sense of the word 'tithi' seems to indicate a stipulated period or some rule regarding such a period. One who need not be bound by such stipulation, or in other words, one who is always welcome irrespective of engagement is rightly called 'atithi' or a guest. The consequent meaning of the word 'atithi' namely a dear one, also occurs in some places in the Rgveda and the Fire God has been called 'atithi', in this sense in a number of places. Those who complete a sacrificial performance in nine months are called 'Navagavās'. Those who finish it after seven or ten months are called 'sapta-gavās' or 'daśagavās'. Similarly, those who are beyond any such rule and who complete a sacrificial performance at any time are called 'atithigavās'. Such is the history of this prefix 'a' in the Rgveda. Thus the word 'asura' though originally meaning highest god

came to be used in a negative sense which has to be explained. The word 'beyond' is relative and indirectly indicates something on this side. The prefix 'a' thus began to be used in a negative sense. As a rule, words which are qualitative in a language, if uttered in a different manner have to indicate the opposite sense. A wiseman indicates a fool, a martyr is a foolhardy person and a belle an ugly woman. The effect lies in the tone with which it is pronounced. The same seems to have been the case with the word 'asura'. On the one hand the word 'asura' means all-powerful, all-holy and all-knowing. On the other hand it means extremely feeble, sinful and stupid. The special accent and tone in pronunciation which had the power to indicate the opposite meaning did not remain in vogue at a later stage, and probably it was before the age of the compilation of the Rgveda that both these opposite meanings of the word 'asura' had already come to stay and the special accent had gone out of vogue. The sense in the words "असुरैविहव्यः" is exactly of this nature. We often appeal to a great personage, "this is my uncouth work as I have already apologized. Please take it for what it is worth and make the most of it". A poet might likewise say to his deity "I had already prayed to you that we, the makers of these offerings, are so undisciplined".

The prefix 'vi' in the word 'vihavya' indicates the same sense. The poet further says that "it is such people as specially need to pray to God or it is such people who have deep faith and devotion; Thou who art thirsty for devotion hearest the prayers of even such people Do thou justify this faith of mine" In fine the 'asura' in the Rgveda means the highest deity, the 'asura' also means persons with stark materialistic leanings. And 'asura' also means feeble, fallen sinners.

Those who lead some sort of restrained life and are consequently people of some culture are 'suras',

those who have no such culture are ‘asuras’; and those who are beyond all possible restraints are also ‘asuras’.\* Both the latter are beyond restraint though differing among themselves and hence both are counted by the same term ‘asura’. In the Rgveda terms denoting deep psychological extra-sensory sentiments are also applied to material facts and events. Take for instance, the Saptasindhu or seven rivers. The element of water, that is subtler and beyond the gross element of the earth, is the fourth among the celebrated five elements. Its seven varieties or seven currents constitute a purely scientific concept. Similarly the Rgvedic classification of everything into seven categories is equally purely scientific. The real essence of manifested Nature consists in waves of energy. These waves can be divided into only seven categories so as to be sensed by human ear. The Rgvedic classification into seven is in keeping with this scientific phenomenon. As already pointed out, acting on the faith, that the extra-sensory (*advidyaivik*) leaves its impress, at any rate partially, on the (*śāśibhautika*) material plane the material counterparts were given the same names as the extra-sensory ones. Very often man does so metaphorically. It is a popular supposition that there are several celestial categories such as Nagas, Garbhavas, Apsaras, Pisachches, Asuras, Rakshases and Daityas. The author Amarkośa supports this idea. Hence these words came to be applied to human beings, possessing similar qualities. Muslim invaders who were bent on destroying and sacrilegious sacrificial performances have been called Daityas. Asuras and Rakshases by Sanskrit as well as Marathi poets. A beautiful woman is even today called an Apsarā (A celestial nymph). Hence words like ‘asura’ and ‘daitya’ might have originally indicated certain special categories and might in course of time

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\* Similar are the two words ‘mati’ (मति) and ‘amati’ (अमति). Amati is that which is beyond intellect i.e. intuition or inspiration. Those who oppose ‘amati’ are those that form obstacles in the path of inspiration.

have come to be applied to human beings sharing their qualities.

Nor does it appear, either from the Rgveda or post-Rgvedic literature, that these words came to indicate particular human groups even in a metaphorical sense. The Purānas (cosmic mythologies) have, however, used them in such a sense. The Rgveda contains monotheism but not devotion to one deity. Among the Rgvedic people themselves some persons emphasising particular notions developed into the Iranian set just like the Buddhists. The cult of devotion among these concentrated attention on the supreme deity Ahurmazd, emphasised self purifications and credited Him with the immanent power to generate good and evil tendencies. All these powers being celestial, all deities except those strengthening the grace of Ahurmazd were deemed obstacles to human welfare and generally termed 'deva' in Iranian literature. The term 'deva' thus came to connote a demon among Iranians. In Jain and Buddhist lore Vedic Indra assumed exactly a similar position by an exactly similar process, although the actual word rāksasa was not used of him. There are certain other fundamental differences among us and the Parsis. It is significant that although the word 'deva' was used to connote a demon no single entity specifically mentioned as 'deva' in the Rgveda occurs in the Avesta as a demon. The chief God of the Parsis is the Indian fire God '*Kravyāda*'. We bury or cremate our dead; they throw the dead body before birds. Our sacred thread has nine strings, theirs has seventy two. We regard marital relations between consanguines (*sapinda*) as reprehensible, while they regard it as most desirable. The idea of the saviour in the sacred charm of the Parsis "*Āhuryathā Vairiyo*" occurs nowhere in the Rgveda (see appendix). It seems from all these facts that if the Parsis broke away from us it was on account of a revolt like the Buddhists and not on account of any practical reasons. Among dissenters one of the greatest difficulties is that of marital

relations. They show a tendency to becoming endogamous for want of a suitable field outside their own community. The Parsis felt it necessary to sanction marriage relations except among children of the same mother which shows that this revolt was, at any rate, initially confined to a few families. Had it not been so but a whole community had seceded on account of some special reason, several traits carefully preserved from the original state might have been found intact irrespective of incidental changes in the culture. For such traits are not affected by external circumstances. Even the case of the Fire God called Kravyāda in India is of great importance and may suffice to corroborate my thesis.

If such a dissenting sect had grown up and subsisted here for a time, like Buddhism, some of its relics would have been found today. That the Parsis migrated from India is borne out by the reference to the 'Hapta Hindu' territory in the Avestā. But, it does not justify the conjecture that the religion took rise here and led to the emigration of a few families to Persia, for, there has been no religious persecution in India barring a few acts of resistance to the Jains and the Buddhists. The only conclusion, therefore, is that this sect arose in Iran itself. There is sufficient evidence in Indian literature to infer that Indians had an extra-Indian empire in ancient times on a large scale. The Śatapatha and Mahābhārata mention that the Indian Empire extended to Bahlka. There is ground for believing that this Empire was even more extensive. In short, therefore, the cult of the Parsis arose, like that of the Buddhists, in Iran, when the Vaidik people had their empire over it and it spread there alone with the result that the Parsee culture and community had its origin from the Aryans and followers from that country. Manu has said that the Kśatriyas among the Aryas who went to foreign countries became Visalas (half-castes). The Zend of the Avesta, like the Pāli of the Buddhists, possesses the character of

a corrupt language (*Apabhramśa*). There is no systematic similarity between the so-called Indo-European languages like Greek and Latin on the one hand, and Samskr̥t on the other hand, notwithstanding the likeness of a few words. From all these factors, it will be seen that the history of the Parsis does not render any help in deciding Rgvedic chronology. The histories of other cultures in Europe and Asia which bear some resemblance to Vedic culture are also equally unhelpful, because it can be asserted that, if at all there is a case of borrowing, it is by the other people from the Rgvedic people. The Rgvedic people have not borrowed anything important from other people.

Even so is the case with the word 'asura'. The idea which it indicated, after it was used for human beings, was one of contempt. There are four chief criteria to show whom the Vedic people termed 'asura'. In the Chhandogya Upanisad there is a parable that Indra the king of Gods and Virochana the king of Asuras went to Prajāpati for obtaining knowledge. Prajāpati told Indra that he (Indra) himself was God. Indra with a really mature intellect began thinking and by a gradual process of elimination came to acquire 'self-knowledge' (आत्मज्ञान). But, the Asura, lacking this capacity, identified his body with the term 'self' and spent away his time in merry-making. As a result he began to regard the material body alone as the highest principle. Hence the best thing to do with the human body was supposed to decorate the corpse lavishly before burial. Chhandogya Upanisad has narrated this story in an extremely derisive tone. (असुराणा हेतोपनिषद्। प्रेतस्य शरीरस्य भिक्षया वसनेन अलकारेण्टि सत्त्वर्वत्ति । एतेच शूर्पु लोकं ज्वेष्यन्ते मन्यन्ते ।) (Ch. VIII 9-5). The Brāhmaṇa works contain a story, that as the Devas snatched the power of speech from the asurās the latter perished. They were unable to pronounce the sound of alphabet 'R' and pitifully approximated it with the sound 'L'. The meaning is obvious. It is clearly stated

in the story that people, who came to be called asuras at a subsequent stage, corrupted Samskr̄t 'R' sound into an 'L' sound. Even in the Paiśāchi dialect the 'R' sound corrupted into the 'L' sound (e. g Rudhiram becomes Ludhilam). This makes it clear, that the asuras are definitely different from the Parsis, for the Parsis can pronounce the 'R' sound. Moreover, the Parsis do not decorate their dead nor bury them. Nor did the Summarians or other people ever do so. The Egyptians though they had this practice could pronounce 'R' sound distinctly. This, therefore, lead to the conclusion that although a certain frontier tribe might metaphorically have been termed 'asura' on a certain occasion, the term 'asura' did not connote a community, at any rate, in Vedic Literature. The Jews addressed their God as Hallelujah which suggests that the minor community (termed asura) might have been assimilated among Chaldeans or Jews.

The main reason for bringing all this discussion is to point out how resemblances of certain words in the language or customs in society cannot justifiably be harnessed to establish the impacts of peoples of various nations with the Vedic people, much less, to decide matters of Vedic chronology. Mere resemblances of the above type are not sufficient as they can result from incidental causes. They can certainly not be used to establish chronological priority or posterity. It is only fundamental principles and traits, of which the resemblance in important matters can be of some use. Or else, one conclusion is inescapable, it is that the superior one among such cultures and the traditions which are in accord with its fundamental principles of that culture belong to the original people and that all others have been borrowed from it. If relics of Summieran culture are found in a territory like Sind all that it can show is that the people following that culture had Sind in their possession at that time. It cannot justify the inference either that Vedic people were not residing in any

other part of India except Sind or that the culture of the Vedic people was not of a high level. Such an inference is patently the result of an argument in a vicious circle. If what is popularly known as the Gāndhāra sculpture is deemed to be Buddhistic sculpture it can at the most prove that Afghanistan (the seat of this sculpture) was once a Buddhist country. It cannot prove further that Vedic people did not exist at that time or that they did not inhabit Kandāhār at an earlier stage. It is a mistaken study of the Rgveda that gave rise to the hypothesis of an Āryan invasion. If the Āryans immigrated from outside they must have flourished somewhere earlier. Casual resemblances assigned to them an Indo-European home. Certain traits of Vedic people resemble those of Chaldea, an offspring of the Summerrian culture. The Vedic people were thus perforce tagged on to Summerrian culture. On grounds, external to Vedic literature, the period of this imaginary invasion by the Vedic people was fixed not earlier than 3,000 B C. Nabonidas of Chaldea says that Sargan flourished at about 4,000 B. C. This might at the most render the Indus Valley culture either contemporaneous with Summerrian culture, or a little prior to it. Hence whatever resembled the Indus Valley culture was deemed to have been borrowed by Vedic Āryans. This is the nature of the labyrinth arguments summing Occidental Vedic research. If a way is to be found out of this labyrinth, casual resemblances alone would not carry us very far. We must follow Macdonnel that the meaning of the Vedas has to be derived from the Vedas alone.

From an elaborate discussion of the terms 'dasyu' and 'asura', we saw that the Vedik people connoted by them, people whom they regarded as belonging to an inferior culture, whatever be the extent of their material prosperity like modern Occidentals. The 'dāsas' the 'dasyus' and the 'asuras' are said to be possessed of illusory power, and only Indra among the gods was a match to them in this respect, which leads to

a surmise, that these people were in several respects even more skilled than Vedic Āryas. If the Vedic Āryas had the notion of cultural inferiority, they must have had some corresponding definite notions about culture itself though they might not have used the particular word Samskr̥ti. From descriptions of dasyus and asuras, the Rgveda idea about uncultured people is that their power of speech was not fully developed. Similarly, it appears from the references in the Chhandogya Upanisad that these (uncultured) people had no philosophy and that their religion and culture had not gone beyond ritual worship, that they had no clear ideas about the soul (jīva) that inhabits the material body or about God, and that their religion and culture (way of life) had nothing to do with philosophy, though the terms like 'muradeva' used for such people indicate they had some sort of religion. This concept of the Vedic people about those belonging to an inferior culture, is in keeping with the concept of culture as defined in the first chapter of this book. It is for the same reason that the dasyus and the asuras are called 'akarmas'. One thing which stands out clear is that in the culture of the Rgvedic Āryans, there must have been an element of philosophy. It is in the light of this factor that we should study the culture of the German, Latin, Greek, Egyptian, Chaldean or Persian people who wish to establish a cognate relationship with Rgvedic Āryans. If, as they claim, the Āryans had this philosophy while they were in their original home, its relics must be found to be clearly reflected in all other above mentioned cultures. If it is argued that this philosophy took rise after their emigration from their imaginary original home to the Punjab, then it has to be further supposed that they must have resided in the Punjab, thousands of years before the compilation of the Rgvedic hymns in order to allow for the necessary period for the building up of this philosophy. Then alone will the hypothesis be consis-

tent with that of the Indo-European home. But it would then mean that other people who came in contact with them borrowed all their other traits, except their philosophy, and thus this argument from analogy comes like a boomerang back upon the modern research scholar. It is even possible to argue that linguistic and social resemblances were probably borrowed by Vedic Āryans prior to the development of their philosophy, that is, when they were outside India. But even this does not seem probable, because none of these peoples possessed the 64 letters of the alphabet of the Vedic Āryas. Suppose, it is argued that the Vedic Āryas borrowed some of these letters of the alphabet from the Dravidians, and further that other branches of the Āryas subsequently, utilized the half vowels mentioned earlier in this work, there is one more difficulty to be surmounted. In my view the very basic hypothesis, namely, that of a common original home outside India which occasions borrowing from the Dravidians has as yet no reliable foundation, and is not beyond doubt. Secondly, we have to imagine two things, in order to prove this hypothesis. In the first instance, the Āryans borrowed some letters of the alphabet from the Dravidians and forgot some of the half vowels from their original home. But such a conjecture is not tenable, for in Dravidian languages like Telugu and Tamil, these half vowels are present and it is not possible to forget them during a close association with them. Moreover, if some letters of the alphabet had been borrowed from the Dravidians, 'L' (ळ) of the Rgveda would have appeared as an independent consonant, but it occurs in the Rgveda not as a separate letter but as an alternative to 'D' in keeping with the very highly Vedic science of pronunciation. Even if we brush aside these difficulties, simply to cherish this fond thesis, one difficulty still confronts us. It is that of the accents of words. Even the English language today is characterised by accents, not to

speak of classical languages like Greek and Latin. Since these accents are in other languages, it cannot be said that the Vedic Āryans created them anew in the Punjab. It is, therefore, a great problem why the accent, the special feature of the language of the Vedic Āryans should not be found in the accents of other languages. The special feature referred to above, is that a difference in the accent in Vedic language makes a corresponding difference in the meaning, dissolution of the compound, case, tense and mood. For instance the word 'apas' in the Rgveda (I, 2-9) has the last syllable accented and means skill or 'an expert'. But when the first syllable of this word is accented, it means function. Or take another instance when the first syllable of the word 'pota' is accented it connotes a sage of that name but when the last one is accented it means 'soma' with the power of purification (Rgveda IX, 67-22). The word 'Joornih' with the first syllable accented means one who prays (I, 127-10) but when the last is accented it means, either a flame or a meteor (I, 129-8). The compound Indraśatru, to which Yāska refers is only too well-known. With the first syllable accented, it means the killer of Indra, with the last it means one killed by Indra. The story goes that the father of Vṛtra who practised austere penance in order to obtain power to kill Indra, when faced by God, committed the blunder of his life by wrongly accenting the compound and as a result Vṛtra his son was himself killed, instead of killing Indra. Accents in other languages do not make such material differences in meaning. People speaking such a highly accented language, therefore, must obviously have been advanced in culture. Vedic Āryas were not unjustifiably proud of their language. One obvious result of their accented language is that other languages claiming resemblances with Vedic Samskr̥t, (though they might have originated from Samskr̥t), do not retain the momentous importance of accent in them, like later corruptions of the

Samskr̥t language. The current of Vedic culture therefore, whether the Vedic people inhabited the North pole or the Punjab, or, migrated from the North pole to the Punjab, is seen to be steady and incessant. It has therefore to be inferred, that even the current of their philosophy must have likewise kept pace with it. It is neither authentic nor reasonable to say that they picked up stray and minor bits from different peoples claiming heterogeneous points of resemblance with them in order to build up their philosophy. On the contrary, it is perfectly reasonable to argue, as I propose, that it was the dissidents who variously developed their different cultures by making alterations in the original framework, and yet, in spite of these haphazard attempts could not help allowing to persist some traits from the original stage. This alone can adequately account for the occasional so-called resemblances today. I am not, here, discussing which was the original home of Āryas. Wherever it may be located the Vedic Āryas who were the authors of the Rgvedic Hymns were alone the inhabitants of the original home and the culture reflected in the Rgveda was alone their original culture. All other cultures are but its faint adaptations and imitations, as will be obvious from the above discussions.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica itself says that proper nouns in the Summ̥erian scripts are most imaginary, as the original script of the Summ̥erian culture is pictorial. The only consistent history which has been built up is that of the Chaldeans, but in that behalf, some things have to be borne in mind. Only a handful of names seemingly Chaldean occur in the Atharva Veda, while no Chaldean name occurs in the Rgveda. On the contrary, some Rgvedic words are presumably found in the Chaldean language. The available consistent history of Chaldea was compiled as late as about 800 B. C. Even if we accept the earlier age of the Chaldean civilization fixed in this history, it can hardly go as far back as 3,500 B.C. Thus poems like "Gil

Gamesh" and religious and other literature can date only after this. The period of the composition of the Rgveda can in no case be brought nearer than 4,000 B C. If, therefore, the Rgveda has borrowed anything at all, it is certainly not from Chaldea. It might be from Summerian culture which existed prior to Chaldean. Unless and until some one proves it to the hilt and shows in particular that the Summerian people had advanced to that extent of philosophical development which was reached by Indians, the only conclusion from resemblances between Summerian and Rgvedic literature that could be reached is, that such resemblances are due to the Rgvedic Aryans being precursors and not followers of Summerian culture. Granting that the material prosperity and advance in art and architecture marked by Summerian culture was greater than that of the Rgvedic people, it does not necessarily prove the anteriority of Summerian culture. Even today the Europeans are more advanced than us in material progress, but this does not make their culture older than ours. The leading criterion for this is, that philosophy, the crowning gem in cultural attainments is our strength and their weakness which they are slowly making up by borrowing from us.

There are certain other important differences among the Chaldean and Vedic people. Barring a few names like 'Apsu' and 'Tiyamat' the names of Chaldeans do not bear any evidence of Vedic philosophy. If we leave out the imaginary similarity between the fight between Tiyamat and Mordoch on the one hand and Indra and Vrtra on the other, we do not find even the name of any Vedic deity in Chaldean literature. The Chaldeans further reveal ignorance of the cow and of the horse so sacred to the Vedic people. They have moreover no acquaintance with Nakshatras in which Vedic Aryans specialized. On the other hand, there is no trace of the knowledge of all planets characterizing Chaldean literature in the whole body of the Rgveda. Five planets have barely been

mentioned in one place in the *Rgveda* (I, 105-10). The Chaldean system of the alphabet is different from the Vedic one. The 432,000 is mentioned among Chaldeans as the period of the ten kings but it is significant that it does not connote the four Yugas. The stage of darkness which is beyond description and is identified with the Eternal one, described in the hymn of creation in the *Rgveda* has nothing to do with the chaotic condition (*apsu*) in the Chaldean story of the deluge. References to gold plentifully abound in the *Rgveda*, but are extremely rare in Chaldean literature. There is no reference whatsoever to 'soma' in Chaldean literature. The Fire God dear to the *Rgvedic* people as an honoured guest has no place among Chaldean deities and the fact, that the cow is conspicuous by its absence among Chaldeans, is of great import.

The resemblance between the Indus Valley culture and Summerian culture has given much food for the research intellect of the Occidental scholars and given rise to amazing and contradictory views among them. As already pointed out if we steer clear of the misleading notions of the so-called Aryan invasion and barbarism, this explanation has no effect on the determination of *Rgvedic* chronology. Even at present a village or a province is seen to be inhabited exclusively by a homogeneous community. In ancient times even different peoples lived in independent groups in one and the same place forming different homogeneous townships. This apart, even if the Indus Valley culture is supposed to be foreign, would it be reasonable to argue that it was the only culture spread over the whole of India? Or that there were no other cultured people in the country, at that time? If a future researcher were to investigate the colony of Goa and to conclude that only Portuguese culture reigned over the whole of Konkan, would this argument hold water? It is not a little satisfactory that the general trend of discussion today is to hold that the Indus Valley culture was prior to Summerian culture and

that it was Indian in essence, whatever be the peoples who built it up. Even Sir John Marshall says with regard to the relation between the Indus Valley Culture and Summerian culture, that "the points of difference between these civilisations are more numerous than the points of similarity". (Times of India 28-1-1929) One more thing to be borne in mind is, that human culture is not evaluated merely with reference to the means of comforts and luxuries and external behaviour. Whatever the degree of our Anglicisation, our culture is yet unaffected, as is easily borne out by our inner life. The people of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa might possibly have been Dravidians, as seen from the exhibits in the investigation but there is no ground beyond a few hasty postulates, (e. g. that deities like Śiva and Pārvati could not have arisen out of Vedic religion at that time, that they must have been borrowed from the Dravidians at a later stage, that the multiplicity of paths is a comparatively recent trait of Aryan culture, and that in ancient time one society consisted of people following only one spiritual path) to rush to the conclusion that Aryan culture was altogether absent in Sind. If Professor Heras' researches are correct then the fact\* that the seals of Mohenjo Daro are characterized by both clockwise and anti-clockwise scripts, is of very great importance. It shows that in Sind itself there were at least two groups which had advanced to the stage of a written script. The Indus Valley culture deserves a close study from this point of view, but it need not detain us any longer, for as already pointed out, beyond a few mistaken obsessions

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\* Vide the "Leader" March, 22, 1946 What evidence is there to show that these seals were manufactured by Dravidians alone? There is more evidence beyond the fertile brain of the Occidental intellectuals who are unable to imagine that within the framework of one and the same advanced society there are several strata characterized by different grades of culture. This is a patent flaw of Occidental scholars who in spite of erudition, intellect and logic are singularly deficient in identifying themselves with the object of study.

which do not help the determination of Rgvedic chronology and also because whoever the people who built it up, the research scholars are inclined to declare it pronouncedly Indian.

One thing, however, should be specifically pointed out and it is the paucity of weapons. An article in 'The Times of India' comments, "the paucity of weapons at both Harappa and Mohenjo Daro is surprising. . . It looks as if these cities were but little acquainted with warfare" ('Times of India' 1-12-28). The significance of this fact is, that the two cities excavated at these places may not picture the entire culture of that region but may be specimens of colonies of specific classes founded with a specific purpose like Buddhist vihāras of ancient India. And hence, despite repeated annihilation by great calamities like earthquakes, attempts were made to maintain the traditions of these cities. The exhibits are eloquent enough to show that earthquakes enveloped these cities without allowing a moment to the inhabitants to try to counter them. The most ambitious attempt to establish a relation between the Rgveda and the Sumnerian people has been made by Dr. Prāñanātha. He read Rgvedic words into Chaldean literature and rushed to the conclusion, that the Rgveda was originally composed in Chaldea! He finds in the Rgveda the names of several Chaldean rivers and places which confirms him in his hypothesis. It is, however, but a human tendency to transplant regional names while migrating from one place to another.\* Even today there are two and even three rivers and cities of the same name in India (e.g. the Pūrnā, the Chandrabhāgā or Amrāvati and Kundinpur). The seven rivers of the

\* The late Lokmanya Tilak has acknowledged this thing Darmestetar, in his introduction to Fargad of the Vandidad, observes that "names, originally belonging to mythical lands, are often, in later times, attached to real ones"—*Arctic Home in the Vedas*, page 292, foot note.

Punjab are well known. Dr. Sardesai has pointed out rivers in Central Asia bearing a close resemblance with the Seven Rivers (Sapta Sindhu) of the Rgveda and it is possible to show similarity between the names of Rgvedic persons and places and those in Egypt. My straight question to Dr. Prānanāth is - If the Rgveda was composed in Chaldea, was it in Samskr̥t or in the Chaldean language? If the former was the case then the Chaldean language must appear to be a derivative from Samskr̥t. If it is argued that the Āryans in Chaldea discarded their language in favour of another, then the original Chaldean-speaking people must be different from Āryans. If another language was adopted without allowing corruptions from the original language the natural tendency to retain intact the original names and deities must be clearly marked and a deity like the Rgvedic Fire God must be seen to exist among the Chaldean people. The names of other deities also must be found, as among the Parsis, but there is nothing of the kind whatsoever. If, in the alternative, it is argued that the Rgvda was originally compiled in the Chaldean language and that the Chaldean names were the original ones, then the Rgvedic names have to be called corruptions and the same difficulty has again to be faced. Again, such corrupt names have to be explained according to Samiskrt etymology. Further, is a bare margin of 6 to 4 millenia B. C. sufficient to mark a progress from the stage of Chaldean culture to that of Rgvedic culture where every form has to be proved with regard to etymology? If it has to be imagined that the original Chaldean people were altogether different, that the Rgveda was composed by the Āryans alone during their colonisation in Chaldea, is it not a much more satisfactory explanation, that the Rgveda was composed in India alone, but spread co-extensively with the Āryan Empire beyond the Indian borders, and that after the decline of the empire several relics of the

same were naturally left behind in different parts of the world ? The first hypothesis has no basis whatsoever while there are several factors suggesting the possibility of the second, as will be seen from the following discussion in this book.

One more thing may be remembered here about the Dasyus, Asuras and other people. All references to them are common and belong to the past. Different kings in the battle of the Ten Princes have distinct names, and even the places of the battles have been mentioned, but references to Dasyus and Asuras are never specific, and belong to the general past. Hence their episodes might long have preceded the composition of the Rgvedic hymns. Let us take an illustration. There is hardly a religious poet in India who has not described how God Visnu came growling out of the pillar, in the form of a lion-man to save his devotee Pralhāda. Even a poet of today sings the panegyric of his god Nāganātha who turned the face of his temple towards Nāmadeva and poet-saints sing and will continue to sing with cordiality and extreme fervour how Pāṇḍurang stood on a brick for the sake of his devotee Pundalika, for all time to come. But do such allusions help to determine the age of a certain culture ? It would be ignoring the sentiments of the Vedic people. It is like the argument that the different synonyms of Indra in the Rgveda are in fact the names of different kings who acquired that elevated state. Even according to this thesis, the tradition of the Indra's valour goes several centuries back but it is indeed an enigma how Āryans fighting with such valour for centuries together could not spread beyond the narrow confines of the Punjab in the Rgvedic age.

I need not here dilate on other conjectures seeking to establish a parental relation between other cultures like the Egyptian and the Rgvedic culture. It is true that the Chhandogya describes the custom of burying their dead among the 'asuras', which resembles the Egyptian custom of preserving their dead. But by itself

it does not lead to any important inference. The Vedic Āryans deemed the Asuras culturally inferior. The horse affords the crucial instance to show, that there was no previous connection between Vedic Āryans and the Egyptians. From the Rgveda, one clearly sees how familiar Vedic Āryans were with the horse. They rode it, they harnessed it to the chariot and offered it in sacrifice. The Egyptians on the other hand, were not acquainted with the horse until about 1,800 B C. This should suffice to disprove a connection between the authors of the Rgvedic hymns and the Egyptians. If we apply the criterion of philosophy as mentioned above, Egyptian culture cannot stand the test. The same is the case with several other cultures which claim to be earlier than the Vedic culture. We need not, therefore, devote separate attention to them. Suffice it to see to what lofty thought the philosophy in the Rgvedic age had reached. But, it is necessary to dispose of a minor point before coming to this major question.

Words like 'Mūradeva' 'Śisnadeva' have been used for Dasyu or Dāsa. Of these 'Śisnadeva' has been a cockpit of controversy. Sāyanāchārya interprets this word as uxorious. European scholars take it to mean a Phallic worshipper. There is no doubt that phallic worship (Linga pūja) has come down from ancient times in India. The pounding stones (uklees) unearthed at Mohenjo Daro have been accounted for as seats of the phallic symbol. If it is true, no doubt remains about the ancient character of phallic worship. Scholars like Justice Woodroffe even go to the extent of saying, that phallic was, at some time or the other, prevalent in all the parts of the globe, and he explains even the Maypole of the English as a relic of phallic worship. It is taken for granted that phallic worship originated with non-Āryans, and that at first it found no favour with the Āryans. But, it is not logically proved, as it has no basis except the hypothesis, resting chiefly on

non-mention, namely, that in early times all society was monostratal and that it was impossible to find the traditions of different paths based on one and the same principle. In the Vedic religion, several forms of worship arise according to the various requirements of the followers without swerving from the main underlying principle and chiefly in the interest of the worshippers themselves. Such forms of worship come into being and go out of vogue in course of time, but this does not prove that they are non-Vedic. For instance, the deity Prajāpati, which was once very commonly worshipped, is not found to be worshipped anywhere, except near the lake Puskara. Similarly, the mediaeval deity Skanda is now only occasionally heard of, in non-Davidian India and only at the time of offering a sacrifice (Skandabali). The worship of Khande Rao, an incarnation of God Śiva, who is known for ridding the earth of foreign enemies has developed in Maharashtra and with it has been associated a kind of sword known as Khāndā (a corruption from Skanda) which was sacred to Skanda; and this form of worship is quite recent compared with the Vedic tradition. The same is true with the deity Māruti. Even the names of the deities Dattātreya and Pānduranga of Pandhari are not found in any work, prior to the Christian Era, barring a possible allusion to Dattātreya under the name of Avadhūta in the Māhabhārata. But, there is not the slightest room for entertaining a hypothesis that these cults were borrowed from non-Āryans. Along with the sacred hymns (mantras) chanted on the occasion of the worship of the deity presiding over foundation (Vāstu Śānti), we hear the name of Vithobā and Rakhumāī in the modern village. It is wrong to conjecture that these names were not heard before, for such a conjecture is based only on non-mention in the available Vedic texts and the imagined primitive character of Vedic culture, as has repeatedly been pointed out above. It is, therefore, not imperative,

to interpret the term 'Śisnadeva' in the sense of a phallic worshipper. The Dasyus have also been called 'Pūrvadevas'. Are we, therefore, to interpret this as worshippers of the East? We simply cannot offer such an interpretation, as the word Pūrva nowhere occurs in the Rgveda in the sense of a direction. It is, therefore, obvious that it must bear some other meaning. Nor is it proper to interpret 'Mūradeva' as people whose god is 'stupid', for the two words namely 'god' and 'stupid' ill go together. The word is not used even as abuse. It is more direct to interpret it as "stupid people, senselessly worshipping any deity". The word 'Vishvedeva' has been used, but it does not mean "people who worship the universe", deeming it to be God. Even the word 'Ugradeva' has been used. Can it be interpreted to mean "those who deem God to be a terrible being"? So is the word 'śuradeva' used in the Rgveda. The word 'Śisnadeva' can, therefore, only mean sensual or uxorious. Even the verses which are cited in corroboration of the meaning 'a phallic worshipper' yield this very meaning with greater justification. Says a verse न शिस्तेवा अधिकरं न । (Let the phallic worshippers not come to our sacrifice). It is not said that they should not throw an obstacle into the fire of sacrifice. Where is the need to pray God Indra simply for driving out an undesirable person coming when there is no occasion for war? Why should brave Aryans with recognized prowess need it? The direct meaning is that as sacrificial performances were pronouncedly holy, every care was taken that they should not be polluted by contact with people guilty of adulterous sins. But the very subject is of such a nature, that the concept of unholiness cannot adequately be expressed, as there is no sure and objective measure of holiness or religiosity. On such occasions it is but proper that a deity like God Indra should be invoked. This is the very subject in the first three verses. It is prayed in them that no sudden calamity like death

caused by supernatural powers placing obstacles in the way of sacrifices, would occur (Rgveda X, 99-3). Even in this verse there is no need to interpret the said word as phallic worshipper. The interpretation "He (i. e. God Indra) kills the persons immersed in sensual enjoyment in the enemies' towns and takes away their wealth" is obviously plain. If the phallic worshippers in the country had been numerous enough to raise forts having hundreds of gates, then, according to the canons of modern research scholars, such people might have built up an independent civilisation. But in these Indus excavations although phallic symbols are found in abundance there is not a single weapon of offence or defence. The word 'Śisnadeva' need not detain us any longer. It can even be shown that phallic worship and God Śiva originated in the fire worship of the Vedic people.

Let us, before closing this chapter, briefly deal with the progress of the Vedic people in the field of philosophy. The Occidental students of the Rgveda seem to be deep-rooted in their conviction (?), that the Rgvedic people first worshipped various natural phenomena through fear and ignorance, and that this worship later developed into an elaborate sacrificial code. They further say, that it was through this stage, that theological concepts developed into the Upanisadic philosophy. If this hypothesis simply means that at that time a major portion of society was marked by such a mentality and emphasised sacrificial rituals, there is no difficulty in accepting this hypothesis. This is common to human history. But the occidental scholars do not simply mean this, they argue that the very growth of the human mind then had not reached a stage so as to entertain any highly philosophical ideas. This is obviously a mistaken hypothesis. Society at any particular stage, does contain people who can think of all the three paths, namely, the path of action (*karma*), worship (*upāsanā*), and knowledge (*Jñāna*), according to their respective capacities. The proportion

of these sections may, however, differ from place to place. Swami Vivekananda has very lucidly explained this point in his epoch-making speech at Chicago. The three paths above named are, therefore, distinct and yet contemporaneous, irrespective of the number of followers each commands. When we say that other cultures jealously attempting to share the philosophy of the Rgvedic Aryans did not have much philosophy, we do not mean that such ideas were totally absent among them. We only mean that those people had not developed these ideas to a stage that warrant their culture being regarded as full-fledged and that they did not rule the daily life of the people. It goes without saying that Chaldean, Egyptian and other peoples did have some kind of philosophy. Ragozin says about their philosophy, that they held that the creation was not merely different from God but was just an emanation, from Him like fragrance spreading from a flower. Ragozin might have derived these ideas from a reading of their literature but it does not appear that there is any direct allusion to them or discussion of such concepts in Egyptian and Chaldean literature. Nor do hymns to their deities echo such sentiment. They did not enter into deep waters, beyond merely saying, as in the Book of the Genesis, that God did such and such a thing. Just the contrary is the case with the Rgveda. As I propose to devote special attention to the philosophy of the Rgveda in a separate chapter, I shall content myself here with barely citing a few distinctive notions which are the differentia of the Rgveda and which will afford valuable help to the study of its philosophy. They will be systematically expounded in their proper place.

1. There is one immanent principle underlying the universe (एक सद् विश्वा बहुआ वदन्ति । I, 164) This very principle obtains both in the manifested universe and in the unmanifested and indescribable stage (पुरुष एवेद सर्वं and अनीदवातस्). Once we notice this it is obviously wrong to say that the Vedic sages cannot answer which

indestructible substance was used by the Divine Power giving birth to creation. The description that "sacrifice (yajña) created the universe does not denote a causal connection, but mere instrumentality.

2. This immanent principle is eternally associated with its unthinkable power (त्वधया तदेकम् !).

3. Since this principle cannot be characterized by any attributes, it cannot be described beyond 'that'. It is 'asat' in the sense of being "beyond all that is expressed" (X, 175).

4. Penance or tapas is the means of creating and maintaining the universe (तपसा तन्महिना अजायत ।).

5 Penance (tapas) and sacrifice (yajña) is the highest form of religion (तानि धर्माणि प्रथमान्यासन् ।). In the manifest universe the Supreme Soul (Paramātmā) alone is found in two forms, namely, Jīva and Śiva द्वादुषणी सद्गुरा० । (I, 164)

6. Since jīva does not realise that the whole cosmos is one, consisting as it does of jīva and Śiva he helplessly goes on experiencing through several cycles of birth In the course of his wanderings when he developed from a gross material stage to his present evolved stage, i. e., where he could speak, he reached a stage of development, when he could manifest himself as an aspect or an element of the Supreme Soul (I, 164-37).

7. It is the Supreme Soul alone, who in the form of the individual soul (jīva) enters the gross body (I, 164)

8. The three categories namely, 'asrik', i. e. the gross body, 'asuh' i. e. vital power and jīva i. e. the inner individual soul are quite different (I, 164).

9. The concept of metapsychosis i. e. reincarnation (this will be elaborately considered at a later stage).

10. The devas or Gods are illuminated, omniscient and immortal and have got illimitable power.

11. There are two categories of language, namely, divine and human, and it is expressed in four forms.

Divine power of speech is endowed with power which was responsible for creating the universe.

In addition to the above fundamental principles, there are certain other notions which are of special value for a comparative study. They are as follows:

1. The importance of Dhyāna Yoga (the path of concentration). The word 'Dhi' in the Rgveda connotes intellect as well as *Dhyāna Samādhi* (a state of composure attained through concentration). The Gāyatri mantra says 'we concentrate' as is well-known. Several instances could be cited wherein the word 'dhi' can be better interpreted to mean concentration or *dhyāna*, rather than mere intellect. Certain other verses (षिवावधानामरिणोत्तर्मणा) make it clear, that in such intense concentration there lies extraordinary power. The supreme value of the Dhyāna Yoga or the path of concentration had been organized only by the Indians and if it existed among other people, it was in esoteric sects and had not been incorporated in the notions of the common people. Of all the archaeological finds in the world the only statue with a Dhyāna pose is found among the Indus excavations, which is not a little significant in this connection.

2. A distinctive feature of devas or deities is that they and human beings are inter-dependent, in other words, their power depends on men's penance, while men's existence is in their hand. The Gita makes this principle lucidly clear. This differentiation of Vedic sacrifices is not to be found in the offerings among other people. The common notion among other people is that of propitiating one's deity, by offering it its favourite object, as an expression of our devotion irrespective of the fact whether the deity needs it or not.

3. Indra in the Rgveda, constantly goes on killing Vrtra. Murduk among the Chaldeans kills Kiamat only once, i. e., at the beginning of creation.

4. The animal offered in the sacrifice is neither killed nor annihilated, but goes to heaven along the

easiest path, and experiences celestial objects suited to its category. ( न वै एतन् त्रियसे न रिष्यसि देवान् वति पदि पाप. परिभिः सुगमि। I, 162-21).

5. Women have no right to a separate portion in a legacy. ( न जापये रिक्ष्यमरेक्षकार। )

6. The conduct of Rgvedic devas or Gods has no motive beyond controlling or favouring (human actions). Greek and other Gods act out of personal motives and even quarrel among themselves, to the extent of utilizing human beings as tools for their purpose. These ideas are totally absent in the Rgveda. They are, however, found in the Purānas (mythological literature).

7. The sublimest aim in human life is another differentia of the Rgveda. There are prayers to Gods that we may have progeny which will go to the world of Gods and become Gods themselves. ( प्रजात्मा विश्वं नाभिमर्त्ते देवानामपि पतु पापः। II, 3-9)

8. Another special trait of Rgvedic Āryans, is the need they felt for offering oblations, rice balls and handfuls of water to the manes for our well-being even after death.

9. The most astonishing system of dividing or classifying the whole universe into seven categories which is borne out even by modern sciences.

10. The phonetic arrangement and perfection of the language, the 64 letters of the alphabet, the accents determining the meaning are an outstanding pride of their own language.

11. The concept of the category of Time and its identification with godhood, the *Suparna Chiti* in the Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa suggests that the deity Suparna or Syena in the Rgveda is originally indicative of the concept of Time. Except the Vedic Āryas, no other people have cherished such a concept of Time.

Several other minute points could be made out. If it is accepted that the Vedic Āryas were inhabitants of the North Pole then such notions scattered in the Rgveda, like the plasma occurring through the whole physical system, must have come down from that stage,

because even the hymns assigned to the Arctic period contain nothing which is inconsistent with these notions. Hence we need not say that their tradition cannot be traced back to the Arctic period, unless the ignorant inferences of foreign scholars are directly borne out by sufficient evidence. Is there any reason to suppose, that even this foreign witness (i.e. western scholars) is in any way more reliable? They cannot even be said to be sound to the extent of being pronounced half-baked. I shall, therefore, say that until their guesses are reinforced by evidence the tradition of these fundamental notions is as ancient as the Arctic period, irrespective of the particular region where the actual composition of the Rgveda took place.

#### NOTE

Dr. Prānanāth's view consists of two parts. The first, namely that the Rgveda was composed in Chaldea, has been examined in this book. His view need not detain us much longer as he accepts the Āryan authorship of the Rgveda, wherever it may have been composed but the second part which tries to establish that the Rgveda describes Chaldean victory is very important as it is vitally connected with Rgvedic chronology. I should, therefore, proceed briefly to examine it here.

His exclusive reliance is on the 133rd hymn of the first Mandala which contains the words, “वैलस्थान” (vailasthāna) and ‘महावैलस्थान’ (mahāvailasthāna). The resemblance between this word to the Chaldean ‘Bela’ is the cornerstone of his whole edifice. He argues that this hymn describes the Chaldean victory of the Āryans and the capture of Babylon (Bylasthāna) after a grim battle. The error in his surmise is that this hymn has nothing to do with a grim battle. All it contains is a description that three batches of 50 each belonging to the enemy were annihilated. Who will characterize this as a grim battle? The Rgvedic Āryans were familiar with really grim battles in which

as many as 6,000 soldiers were annihilated (VII, 18-14). Equally wrong is the connection which he seeks to establish between Rgvedic 'vaila' and Chaldean 'Bela'. It can be proved on independent grounds that 'vaila' meant a pyre or a cremation ground. Several Rgvedic words, though they became obsolete in later Samskr̥t have been preserved with more or less exactitude in modern Marathi, will be seen from the following table.

Marathi Words	Rgvedic Words
Anturi ( woman ) अतुरी	Strī स्त्री
Kin ( that ) कीम्	Ākin, nakih, mākih आकिन, नकि, माकि
Íssá ( Oh )* इशा	Itcha इत्च
Laya or lai ( Plenty ) लै	Rai रै
Nimme ( Half ) निम्मे	Nema नेम
Ātān ( Now ) आतं	Āt आत्
Asara (Source of trouble) असर	Asara असर
असर	
Ghamaghamāt ( plenty, Magha ( plenty of wealth ) especially of fragrance)	घमघमाट मध्य
Rite ( empty ) रिते	Rta ऋत्
Śilak ( A very thin piece of the bamboo used to stitch into a dinner plate)	Silika सिलिक
शिल्क	

The word Iblis ( meaning mischievous ), which has come through Arabic sources has also descended from the Rgvedic 'Ilibiś' connoting a giant. Similarly the word 'vaila' has come down in Marathi in the sense of an appendage of an oven which stores up heat from embers. As this very word has been maintained in Marathi in the exact original Rgvedic sense, it simply knocks the bottom out of Dr. Prānanāth's thesis.

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\* An expression, especially feminine, expressing bashfulness,

## FIVE

### THE FOUR VARNA SYSTEM IN THE RGVEDA

I have so far given a brief account of the pitiful travesties made of the Rgvedic research by the modern science of research and have also indicated the proper lines on which work should be done I propose to discuss in this chapter a topic very vital to the study of the Rgveda, namely the Four Varna System. There is an acute difference of opinion on the point whether the Rgveda bears evidence of the existence among Aryans of the Four Varna system, and even after heated controversies, nothing more satisfactory has come out except an extremely far-fetched interpretation of the texts in the Rgveda If the problem of the Four Varna system had only been an item among others in the Rgvedic Age, I should not have devoted an independent chapter to it. But I am constrained to discuss this question, because the thesis, namely, that the Four Varna system simply did not exist in the Age of the Rgveda, has only been taken for granted by scholars of Rgvedic culture, but has also been made the basis of further fantastic inferences as regards other aspects of Vedic chronology The question has, therefore, assumed such a great importance that if Rgvedic culture is to be properly interpreted it has first to be satisfactorily solved. Even great scholars have to admit that it has not been so solved The late Shree Baba Saheb Patwardhan, for instance, while briefly supporting the view that the Four-Varna system did not exist in

the Vedic Age, has simply referred to the views of 'several experts'. We have already seen that the research work of these 'experts' attaches more importance to the number of expected references than to the very existence of that reference. But we should also remember that these very scholars, when building up the castles of their theories in the air, are satisfied not only with a single reference but also with a semblance of it (as in the case of a word like 'pramaganda'). Even the late Shree Baba Saheb solely relies on the point that words like Vaishya and Sudra do not occur anywhere in the course of 11,000 verses except in the 'Purusasukta'.

In order to elucidate why this very problem has to be solved in order to form a proper and correct idea of Vedic Culture, let us take an illustration. A matter which is common occurrence in everyday life is by a tacit understanding, not specifically mentioned, for it does not need such a separate mention. For instance, in the Indian Science of Medicine, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian remedies are recommended alike for the same disease. It need not be specified that the former is meant for the Brāhmaṇas as exclusively vegetarians and the latter for the rest. For, physicians of yore easily understood it. Or take another instance, in this age for the propaganda for the breaking down of the barrier of the caste system, a common inter-caste dinner has to be publicized, but in the alternative, in the case of a dinner at a non-Brahmins place, it is not specifically mentioned that separate arrangements have been made for Brahmins. This is because such arrangements have always traditionally been made. A bare mention or non-mention is, therefore, not the sole criterion of the truth which has to be ascertained in the social context. But this very fact is lost sight of in the study of Rgveda. If it is proved that there was no Four Varna system in the Rgvedic age, there is no harm in it. But, if on the other hand, there is a possibility of its existence, a real study of Rgvedic

culture would considerably be affected. There are several places in the Rgveda, where a definite conclusion on this point is a necessary preliminary to a proper interpretation. For instance, the social reformer of today feels the need for widow remarriage, and, hence, as a means of his propaganda, feels the need of proving that it existed in the Rgvedic age. In the hymns of the Āświns, in the Tenth Mandala, words like, 'Vidhaveva Devarām' and especially a verse like चतोर्वर्षायभिजीवलोक्न् (10-18) make scholars feel that widow re-marriage was in vogue in that age, and on its basis, a sweeping statement is made that it was throughout in vogue in the Rgvedic Age. It is taken for granted while making such a statement that there was then no Four-Varna system, but it is quite likely, that such references could occur despite the Four-Varna system being there. If we leave out the first two orders of the Four-Varna system, namely, Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya, remarriage has been common among the next two classes, from very early times, and the above reference could very well be with regard to them. The Rgveda itself reveals, that, even within a society planned on the Four-Varna system, there could be different traditions. Take for instance the disposal of the dead. Both cremation and interment are seen to be common at the same time which leads to the inference that the two practices were for two different classes in one and the same society. The description of cremation among classes like the Brahmins, cosmological concepts, like the lustre of the eye going back to the Sun, and the vital breath reverting to the Wind, occur in the 15th and 16th hymns of the 10th Mandala. It is, therefore, clear that the ritual in the 18th hymn was meant for some group other than Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya within the framework of the Four-Varna system. It is popularly supposed that the 18th hymn refers to the sati, but I do not think it is so. This hymn is meant more for those who took to burial than for those who took to

cremation and there is no room for allusion to the sati, as the sati gets herself cremated not buried. Since there is no connection with the sati whatsoever, it is but reasonable to console a woman, who has thrown herself on the corpse of her husband in a fit of sorrow and to lead her back. The meaning given by Sāyanachārya to this verse is also tenable. If it is argued that this verse refers to a woman who after having given up everything, has mounted the pyre of her husband, it may be pointed out that even in that age, it was not a common practice, but only a matter of exception. I think that to suggest on this grave occasion that she should remarry another and beget children, (instead of saying a word about her intense, sublime and exclusive love for her deceased husband) is not only ungentlemanly but most despicable. No person with a heart or sentiment, worth the name, would ever be brazen enough to utter such words on such an occasion \*

In the Āśvalāyana Grhyasūtra, only one verse from this hymn has been prescribed and that too for the burial of the dead, which shows that this hymn does not refer to the funeral obsequies of the higher classes. Several hymns in the Rgveda have similarly to be interpreted as referring only to some classes. For instance it is not reasonable to argue that the gamblers' hymns embody a description of those who practised fire-worship three-times-a-day and of the drinking of soma. How could the sacred fire-worship be carried on when the wife had left for her father's place? There are several other references of this type. It has now been admitted on all hands, that there were different strata in Rgvedic society

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\* Compare in this connection the consolation offered in the Vālmīki Rāmāyana to Tārā by Rāma after Vāli's death. Is it ever possible to suggest remarriage in such circumstances? It was obvious that Tārā was to continue to be a consort to Sugrīva and yet Hanumān could not even refer to it.

and yet simply out of prejudice, it is not conceded that there must have been some arrangement among these classes and that this must naturally be reflected in the similes and metaphors of the period. If the so-called Sanātani (orthodox) is likely, as alleged, to get a headache at the denial of the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda, the self-styled scholar of today is more certain to get a whirling sensation at the slightest suggestion of the prevalence of the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda! (As Bernard Shaw has pointed out, if the average man in the Middle Ages was a superstitious believer in the word of the Scriptures, the average moderner is a thousand times more superstitious in his unquestioned faith in printed word. The same may be said of the research scholar of today.)

Among the grounds for denying the existence of the Four-Varṇa system in the Rgveda are the following :—(which have already been considered at an early stage).

1. An insistence that a particular reference must occur a certain number of times, to the utter neglect of the general nature of the Rgvedic compilation and a specific policy underlying the compilation.

2. A hasty decision about the date of the 10th Mandala on flimsy grounds to the utter neglect of the general nature of Vedic culture.

3. To insist that the allusions to words like 'Brāhmaṇas' and 'Kṣatriyas' have wrongly been interpreted by Sāyanāchārya in a communal sense and that they should, therefore, be considered as having qualitative meaning simply to make room for the 10th Mandala as the sole evidence for the Four-Varna system on the sole basis of one's convenient supposition. To insist, therefore, that Sāyanāchārya's qualitative interpretation of words like 'parśu', 'prthu', 'praman-gada' is wrong.

4. To insist that the Rgveda represents only the Rgvedic culture brushing aside the very claim of that culture that it originates from the Vedas and

also the unbroken traditions of that culture from the Rgveda down to the present day.

5. To accept on other convenient occasions proofs not only from the Brāhmaṇa works or from the Sūtra works but even from mythology. To be satisfied even with a single reference on such convenient occasions. But to insist on certain occasions that words like 'Rājmānya' 'Vaiśya' and 'Śūdra', if occurring only once as they do, may be taken to be almost absent from the Rgveda. It, therefore, means, that either the hymns containing them are interpolated, or the author of the hymn uttered something out of intoxication, as it were, and his utterances came to have their present meaning, by sheer accident. The notions of the sponsors of the Mantra School, that meaning came to be born out of collocation of words originated for the convenience of the mantra is more reasonable.

Similarly there are certain other reasons which I may proceed to consider. To a person considering Rgveda from a synthetic point of view it is imperative to admit that the technique of Vedic religion during the period of its composition of the hymns was not far removed from that of today. The Maharastrian Encyclopaedia makes a clean breast of the fact, that the popular religion of today is not far different from that of the Rgvedic age. It also admits, that there is plenty of evidence to show that hereditary brahminhood had come to be established during the period of the composition of the hymns. But once hereditary brahminhood is admitted the question is why in case of the other varnas, a mere absence of a reference should suffice as a basis for denying the tradition. These people do admit that a Four-Varna system means a hereditary system, or else the bottom would be knocked out of the controversy. They do not doubt the existence of the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda. The only field for controversy is, therefore, reduced to the hereditary nature of the Four-Varna system. They claim that such a system is not to be found for a

long time, even after the Rgveda, not to speak of the Rgvedic age I do not think much useful purpose would be served by attempting independently to demolish the stray pieces of evidence which they forward in support of their view. It would only swell the body of the book. I shall, therefore, content myself with a brief illustration, to show how the very line of thought of these scholars is perverted and further elaborate how I consider the Four-Varna system came to be writ large on the Rgveda.

In the Chhāndogya Upanisad we have the story of Satyakāma Jābāla, which is very often used to prove that the Four-Varna system was not hereditary at an earlier stage, but in so doing, several important matters are overlooked. Really speaking, this very story establishes the hereditary character of the Four-Varna system. Jabalā, Satyakāma's mother, had relations with several people during her career as a maid-servant. Satyakāma was born to her of one out of them. Satyakāma next repaired to Haridrumata Gaumata to obtain knowledge, which by the way was spiritual knowledge and not the knowledge of the Vedas. This is amply borne out by the description of the various ways, through which he attained spiritual knowledge. But the attainment of spiritual knowledge requires a certain amount of penance He was, therefore, asked by his preceptor to take to the worship of God Fire The privilege of taking to this worship is not confined to the Four Varnas only but is also extended to those born out of inter-caste connections It is necessary to be duly initiated into any particular devotional process, before one can prosecute it. Although we nowadays use the word 'Upanayna' to connote an initiation into brahmacharya (celibacy), yet the word is of common connotation as its root\* meaning

\* A well-known scholar has raised a difficulty in this connection that in the original the words नह्यन्व विश्वत्यामि (I wish to observe brahmacharya) have clearly been used How could

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would bear out. Upanayana, however, does not mean "merely conducting to the preceptor's house like the modern ceremony of admission to a school." Dr. Altekar says it was only so, but the Chhandogya Upanisad does not mention anybody to whom Gautama (who uttered the enunciation "I shall take you to सहस्र उपनिषद्") took Jābāla, which itself makes it clear that upanayana had come to be a sacrament complete in itself by that time. The other question he asked Jābāla, namely, 'to what clan (gotra) do you belong?', is similarly significant. It did not require any elaborate procedure. Upanayana means the preceptor taking the pupil near the deity. This very purpose is accomplished in the Upanayana ceremony through various rituals. In popular ceremonies although we say that it is the father who conducts the Upanayana, it is really conducted by the preceptor either by himself or in combination with the father. This story must, therefore, be interpreted in the light of all these facts. It must likewise be borne in mind that at a stage when it actually took place, the present day controversies were not in existence, and it would naturally mention the popular tradition which was actually in vogue. If Four-Varna system was not hereditary, but was only decided by quality (guna) and action (karma) there was nothing to prevent a clear mention of it or to make the preceptor tell

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such a meaning then be drawn, unless it meant the thread ceremony? But it is not correct to say so. The word 'brahmacharya' occurs in the Upaniṣad in the sense of observing a vow e. g. in the Brashnopaniṣad Sukeṣha and other sages observed brahmacharya for one year at the instance of Pipalāda and other sages. Now all these sages were advanced in age. They were devoted to Brahma and absorbed in it. The same was the case with Satyakāma's brahmacharya. It is obvious that he was not pure in birth or else it is impossible that until he himself wanted to learn it he should not have known his clan (gotra). How could he have remained uninitiated (without a thread ceremony) up to such a late stage?

Satyakāma Jābāla that he would first test his quality. Such a question would rather first have been put to him. In such circumstances why should the preceptor at all ask the intending pupil about his parantage when the latter approached him with a request to impart knowledge to him. This does not seem to have been a casual inquiry; for the pupil's Varna was decided by the (*bija*) seed or root which became clear from the answers given by him, as the story itself reveals. If it was only a question of enquiring the father's name, Jābalā might have wriggled out of the difficulty by naming anybody, but, far from doing so, she had to reveal her secret to her son which shows that it was essential to his welfare to learn the truth, or, in other words, the attainment of spiritual knowledge in a way depended upon the character of his parantage. This is consistent with the subsequent conduct of his preceptor. If he had nothing whatsoever to do with the pupil's birth, even he would have said in appreciation, 'you are a brahmin since you are speaking the truth'. But instead of saying so, (that is instead of saying "speaker of such a thing deserves to be a brahmin") he said "no non-brahmin would speak like this" This clearly means that the preceptor took into consideration not the moral virtue but the quality of the birth of the child as moral virtue which (according to the then current belief) naturally resulted from the character of parantage. The word 'ark' is also highly helpful as it emphasizes the quality of the birth alone.

And yet, it is a specimen of strange logic, that this very story is exploited to prove the absence of hereditary Four-Verna system. If such a strange logic were to be applied, any piece of evidence could be pressed into the service of strange conclusions in this work. There is one more peculiarity of this story. If the mere virtue of speaking the truth was applied as the sole criterion to decide the identity of Varna it would mean that things had come to such a pass,

that at that stage, the other three Varnas than Brāhmaṇa were conspicuous by the absence of truthfulness. It does not seem likely that anyone would malign the whole Aryan race (leaving, of course, the Brāhmaṇās, as this story does) deliberately merely out of an ulterior motive. If quality (*guṇa*) was at all the sole criterion of Varna then in contemporary society *guna* must have meant some special quality, that is, a quality other than common attributes.

Such a strange system of logic has its defects aggravated by the Vedic words having often more than one meaning. In the Rgveda there is no certainty that a particular word would definitely be used in a particular sense. One and the same word often bears an unimaginably, strange interpretation. But there is a method even in this strangeness. It is not that all the meanings given by Sāyaṇāchārya are conventionally accepted meanings. In some places he has relied mainly on imagination, but, as a rule, he has emphasised the etymological, idiomatic and associational sense alone. This is clear from the fact that he has given several alternative meanings and has also differed from Yāskāchārya in several places. The European scholars are right to some extent, in cautioning that we should not solely rely on Sāyaṇāchārya, because Sāyaṇāchārya, although he bases his interpretations on time-honoured traditions, is likely to labour under one handicap. The interpretation of the Vedas presents the same difficulty as that of the Gita. Different commentators, while regarding the Gita as authentic, put different interpretations on its texts, as they have different notions of its purport. Yāskāchārya mentions that several schools arose (such as historical or spiritual) in the course of the interpretation of the Vedas. These schools must have had their respective commentaries. Yāskāchārya himself was a sponsor of Nairukta. The Mīmāṁsakas regarded the Rgveda as useful for the ritualistic portion and must, therefore, had their own system of interpretation. This is clear from the fact that

Sāyanāchārya has abandoned the original sentimental sense of words like 'namas', 'Shravas' 'Ishas', and has accepted their metaphorical sense. Similarly, while interpreting several words which earlier commentators had passed over as obvious, Sāyanāchārya had to select one particular meaning out of several rival alternatives. But, even these alternatives have now become obsolete. Sāyanāchārya's interpretation, therefore, cannot be accepted *in toto*. This means, in other words that although Sāyanāchārya wrote his commentary in keeping with the mould of Vedic culture, within the framework of that culture, he has plied his own independent rational intellect. Hence at such places at least Sāyanāchārya cannot be regarded wholly reliable. This interpretative liberty has also its own limits as said by Lord Krishna in the Gita "Oh Arjuna, desire in consonance with Dharma is my manifestation". And even Sāyanāchārya may be taken as an authority on matters of interpretation of Dharma, as in expressing his freedom he does not lose sight of general spirit and tradition. This is a fundamental difference between the so-called *liberty* of Sāyanāchārya and the license of European scholars. This is why I have criticised European Scholars' view, that Sāyanāchārya cannot be wholly relied upon. Sāyanāchārya had cultural bonds, he had a vital regard for our culture, of which he had also an intimate knowledge and which he was seeking to preserve. This was the sole urge that made him undertake the arduous task of composing the "Mādhabīya Vedārtha Prakāśa". Just opposite is the case of the European scholars. They have no restraint whatever. There is no possible reason why they should have vital regard for our culture, with which their acquaintance is most superficial and for the preservation of which they need not have any concern, not to speak of cordiality. They are obviously actuated, by illusions about their superiority, if not out of positively wicked motives, to devour this culture as it were, and wrote their works chiefly to parade their learning. Hence there is a world

of difference between Sāyanāchārya's so-called *liberty* and, what I term, the license of European scholars. Wherever there is an option between two interpretations in Sāyanāchārya's commentary, none of those options is likely to vitally affect the basic and comprehensive cultural questions. On the contrary wherever European scholars raise a doubt or difficulty, it is, as a rule, directly or indirectly linked up with questions of cultural import, which would make my meaning amply clear. When one takes into account these special traits of these two types of Rgvedic scholars, one is convinced that Sāyanāchārya's standpoint alone is natural and congenial to our case. This is why any student has the right to abide by his (Sāyanāchārya's) fundamental standpoint. Even while rejecting some of his interpretations and suggesting new ones I, too, propose to do the same. Sāyañāchārya gives his own interpretation but it is in full cognizance of the fundamental principle of Vedic culture, its unbroken tradition and the vast mass of available literature bearing on it. The European scholars on the other hand, without the slightest regard for the help that may be derived from contemporary literature, the fundamental principles of Vedic culture, or its time-honoured traditions, attempt not only fancifully to interpret Vedic texts by clever logic or sheer imagination, but also to try to picture, and what is more, to assess Vedic culture on its fragile strength. Their views, therefore, cannot be given any weightage whatsoever, especially in vital problems like the hereditary character of the Four-Varna system.

Words like 'Brahma', 'Kṣatra', 'Viś' occur frequently in the Rgveda and have been differently interpreted by Sāyañāchārya; but Sāyañāchārya has no prejudicial obstinacy to interpret the word 'Parśu' only in the communal or ethnic sense and words like 'Brahma' or 'Kṣatra' only in the qualitative or connotative sense, and so interprets even the later words in the communal sense. (This insistence of the

modernders is particularly marked in interpreting passages like सप्तलीरिष पर्व. 1 X, 33-2. Chitraqo Sāstri has also interpreted the word 'parśu' in a communal sense but has not taken into account the appropriateness of the simile of a co-wife. Although different co-wives harass the husband, out of mutual jealousy, each does want the husband Parshu at the most would indicate one and the same community and that which, too, must have been inimical. There was no love lost between them and the sages who were the authors of the hymns. The simile of the co-wives would become only the bones, aching through different kinds of strains, and not the 'parshu' people, if any. \*) In such places such interpretations are rejected on the sole strength of the unquestioned postulate that the Four-Varna system did not exist in the Vedic Age. There are several places in the Rgveda where the Brāhmaṇas a Varna is clearly indicated. Take for instance the 33rd hymn in the 8th Mandala which is accredited to Kanvamedhātithi. The last three or four verses in it are very interesting. Having raised a question as to whom they may have been addressed, Sāyanāchārya has cited the story of Asanga Plāyogy in this connection. But it is not borne out by the context. The whole speech seems to have been addressed to a woman. Says the sage, "Indra is not subordinate to anybody. He may do as he pleases. It is, therefore, difficult to propitiate him". He is, therefore, warning the woman to beware. He is mentioning Indra's view that the mind of a woman is unruly. (हिंच अगास्त्र नन उत कुरु रु) And hinting "Lo, there comes Indra." It is difficult to say why it should be supposed that the next sentence is uttered by Indra himself. There is no meaning in

\* This is a telling simile indeed. A lean person feels his ribs hurt while sleeping on the ground whichever side he may turn. The co-wives appropriately compared to the ribs on the two sides which rack a weak husband on both the sides. But there is a point in the simile. The pain is the greater because of the intimate relation with the torturor. If the word 'parśu' is interpreted as inimical Parsis the interpretation misses this point.

saying "you were originally a man but have now become a woman and should therefore behave modestly, because it is impossible to imagine that even after becoming a woman, Asangaplāyogy lived among men" i. g. he remained so in spite of previous memory, and carried on the work of a sacrificial priest. If it is said that he had no previous memory and was so addressed when he was just moving about in the house, there is no occasion for such a pre-supposition especially, in the midst of a hymn. It, therefore, appears that this anecdote of the Brhad-devatā is not authentic. European scholars do not interpret the passage in the light of this anecdote. I personally feel that this is a conversation between a husband and a wife. It has already been said that according to the scriptures, women are untamable. The obvious meaning is, therefore, that the husband is saying to the wife, "Indra is coming at great speed; therefore behave yourself; let not your legs (thighs) be exposed." It is more appropriate here to take the word "kashaplaka" in the sense of thighs. After saying 'अथ पद्यस्वमोगरि' there is no occasion to say "let not your breasts be bared". If it is said it refers to the hips, they are never exposed. So far as the feet are concerned, it has already been said that they should properly be put together. Nor does it refer to the ankles. Therefore, it is the thighs that are likely to be exposed by sitting in a careless manner, and this must have been indicated here. But even in this verse the words 'Strīhi' 'Brahmā' are more important. Patwardhan's interpretation, namely, "though you are a woman you have become Brahman in this sacrifice" is not appropriate.\* Here the word 'Brahmā' most probably connotes a communal sense, namely, "Remember that you are first of all a woman and then too a Brahmin woman". Though Sāyanāchārya

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\* Is it either possible or gentlemanly that a woman who had attained the status of acting as the chief sacrificial priest be addressed in so indecorous a fashion by some one else as "The mind of woman is unruly" or "Sit in a becoming manner?"

gives the meaning "Having become a woman though a Brahmā" it does not seem convincing. Here, not only is the Brāhmaṇa Varna clearly indicated but even its cultural superiority is unmistakably alluded to.

In this very hymn the words मवता श्रुगद्व निरो न्द्योऽस्यात् occur in the 13th verse. 'Girah' is interpreted as 'praise' and 'Brahmā' as panegyrics and yet the word 'ukthani' is added. What difference is there between prayer and panegyric? Really speaking, it is intended to differentiate between prayers and panegyrics on the one hand, and songs (sāma) chanted scientifically by the Brahmins on the other. Since the task of chanting the songs (sāma) in the sacrifice is not assigned to Brahmā the correct interpretation here is 'panegyrics offered by Brāhmaṇas'. Similarly in another passage (II, 43) the words मन्त्रसुप्त त्र तत्त्वं पु शस्ति occur where 'Brahmaputra' does not merely mean ब्राह्मणाच्चति but the son of a brahmin. This is the only interpretation which stands to reason, from all the similes used. It is admirably said here that such a small bird even when just out of the eggshell is capable of doing the great service of indicating omens. If the alternative interpretation is accepted the very point in the simile is lost †.

In this case a brahmin boy who, in spite of his tender years, works like adults among them in a sacrifice is the subject of admiration. One more reference may be taken into account here. It is said

\* The *pada patha* (analytical text) goes, however, against my interpretation. But the *pada patha* is after all a convenient device adopted afterwards, and is likely to admit of this much variation, specially in this place. Researchers like the late Rajwade go to the extent of saying that it is possible that even the Rgvedic accent have been strongly marked in the texts in some places (Intro to Rādhāmādhaba Vilāsachampū).

† Sāyanāchārya's interpretation errs because it neglects the poetic aspect of the verse. Both Sāyanāchārya and modern researchers have neglected this aspect of research. The word "Brahmajāya" (feminine) also occurs in Rgveda (Maharashtra Ency Vol III). Even this single word is crucial enough to decide the controversy.

there that Brahmā likes the sacrificer (ब्रह्मासुन्वन्तमिच्छति IX, 111). Here too, Brahmā should properly be interpreted as brahmin. The word 'Vrata' usually occurs in the Veda in the sense of 'a stipulated ritual'. We should remember that the word 'Vratani' occurs in addition to the earlier word 'Nanadhiyah'. This is a reference to different kinds of people who were just given to money making. There are, here, two types clearly referred to and have to be particularly noted. On the one hand, there are the professionals following different callings, and on the other hand are members of one and the same family who do different kinds of jobs for earning money. The expression 'Nānāvratāni' refers to the former type while the other expression 'Nānādhiyah' refers to jobs, and not to professions, i.e. it refers to the latter type. All the persons whether they follow the medical profession or that of pounding and grinding corn for livelihood belong to one and the same family, and the thing to be particularly noted here is that all these jobs are capable of being done by members of a brahmin family. The different professionals are mentioned by their communal denominations by which they have till now been referred to. The word 'Brahmā', occurring as it does in common with 'taksā' 'phisag', 'karmā', must be interpreted in a communal sense.

Apart from the word 'Brāhmaṇ' there is another word, namely 'vipra', occurring frequently in the Rgveda and indicating the Brāhmaṇa class. In all Rgvedic literature it unequivocally connotes the Brāhmaṇa class. The word 'vipra' admits of three meanings just like the word 'Brāhmaṇa' meaning a panegyrist, a sacrificial priest and a person belonging to the Brāhmaṇa community, or like the word 'kavi' meaning a learned person or a person composing poems. 'Vipra' means a learned man or a sage (as in अथामातुरुपस सप्तविग्रा॑) and a person belonging to the Brāhmaṇa community. There are places in the Rgveda, where the word 'vipra' has to be interpreted, if the interpretation

to be purely unprejudiced, as a Brâhmaṇa, whether it denotes a class (वर्ण) or a word (वर्ण). Take for instance, the passage वयं वानेते इदु विषा अपिस्ति (VIII, 55-13). The word 'vipra' here cannot be interpreted as a sage and if it is to be interpreted as a panegyrist, it would be too far-fetched and can only result from a dogged tenacity not to allow the slightest glimpse of the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda. In this prayer the sense is, "we have firm faith in You Who else is there to take pity on us?" Students of the Rgveda can easily notice one thing, namely, that the sage or Risi is a very powerful being. The panegyrists cannot possibly boast of their learning and if they do so the suppliant tone of the hymn becomes inconsistent. The direct meaning here seems to be, "Oh Indra, we Brâhmaṇas are sheltering solely under your devotion. Do not therefore neglect us." In the verse ब्रह्मा देवान् पठवी क्वोन् कपिरिप्राान्! (IX, 96-6) recited by the Brâhmaṇas as a matter of daily routine, all these three words occur at one and the same place. Here, all the meanings can be nicely distinguished from one another. "Brahmâ is the panegyrist of the gods, chief among the learned and the Rsi among the Vipras". (IX, 96-6) Here, since the words 'panegyrist' and 'a learned man' have already occurred, the remaining expression, namely, "the Rsi among the Vipras" can only mean "a Brâhmaṇa who has reached the status of a Rsi". Even Sâyanâchârya has in several places interpreted the word 'vipra' as Brâhmaṇa alone. Now the question which arises is, "out of the two senses, namely, qualitative and communal, of the word 'Brâhmaṇa' which is earlier? Looking at it impartially, it is but reasonable to suppose that the community must first have come into existence on account of some reason, and the specific traits of the community must have resulted in its qualitative meaning. Even today we do use such expressions as "he is a pukka Konkanastha" (as the Englishman speaks of a Scotchman) or "I am a plain Deśastha (that is uncouth, undisciplined, though liberal and well-meaning folk).

But there is another reason to say that the qualitative meaning of these words must have risen at a later stage. The word 'Varna' in the Four-Varna system, which has been the cockpit of controversy, also occurs in the Avestha of the Parsis. Even there, it has several meanings, one of which is "some specific customs and manners" or, 'cults'. Even the Editor of the Maharashtrian Encyclopaedia accepts, that the communal or denominational character of the term 'Varna' pre-dates the composition of the hymns. This only means that if we take the concept of the invasion as true then the word 'Varna' was communal or denominational when the Parsis and Aryas lived together. Suffice it for us to say that the communal character of the word 'varna' pre-dates the composition period. Even this leads to the inference that the qualitative sense has come at a later stage, through the force of metaphor, and that the communal sense is the primary one. Apart from the distinct reference in the Purusa-sūkta, there is one other place, where the word 'Brahman' has been unquestionably used in the communal sense. Here Vaśista has been addressed as 'Oh Brāhmaṇ' (VII, 33-11). Taking into account the whole context, it would be obvious to anybody that the word cannot be taken in the sense of one of the sacrificial priests or a panegyrist.\* The word 'Brāhmaṇ' here has undeniably been used in the sense of a Brāhmaṇa. In fine, therefore, there are at least two words frequently occurring in the Rgveda, distinctly referring to the Brāhmaṇas as a specific

\* In this hymn Vaśista's power has variously been described. He knows by intuition the universe with a thousand aspects (तद्विषयं हृष्यस्यप्रकोटौ सहस्रवल्लभमित्यरन्ति ।) His prowess is as great as that of the sun. A person possessed of such super-human accomplishments cannot again be styled as a mere panegyrist. How can a panegyrist himself characterize the object of his prayer as a panegyrist? Vaśista is the object of the prayer here and calling him panegyrist does scant justice either to the devotional sentiment or to the poetic talent. Brāhmaṇa can only mean here belonging to the Brāhmaṇa community.

community, apart from the well known reference in the Purusasukta. Even the word 'ksatriya' occurs in several form (Kṣatra, katriya or Rajan) in the R̥gveda. The first two words also connote strength, spirit etc. The word 'Kṣatriya occurs in the Taiteeriya and Atharva Samithās in the sense of ailment. Nevertheless, Sāyanāchārya has in several cases interpreted it as the Kṣatriya community. Take for instance the passage नदिना राज्ये इक्षितत् (Maṇḍala IV). In the 8th Maṇḍala the 35th hymn mentions all these three words Brahma, Kṣatra, and Vish. The point to be noted is that, the words are used along with the specific functions of these communities, and mention the three Varnās, as even great scholars have to admit. One might at first sight think that even the word 'Kṣatriya', if viewed without prejudice, occurs in some places in the R̥gveda in communal or denominational sense, and, when one is reminded of the prejudice, that there is to be allowed no Four-Varna system in the R̥gveda one may be actuated to invent a different interpretation to reinforce the prejudice. The word 'vis', if we leave out its mention in the Purusasukta and in the 8th Maṇḍala, has been used in most places in the general sense of subjects or even humanity and is likely to confuse the reader. But really speaking there is no reason for such a confusion. The Purusa-sukta specifically refers to the Four-Varna system because it is describing a social arrangement. But, ordinarily, since the Śudrās had no special independent standing from the point of view of Vedic lore and since they were always attached to the other three Varnās, they were tacitly included in the train of the three Varnās. Hence from the point of view of Vedic lore Ārya society can be divided only into three classes. Even out of these the Kṣatriyās and Brāhmaṇās are fully authorized to study the Vedās. The only difference among them is that the Brāhmaṇās teach and receive emoluments from others whereas the Kṣatriyās do not. The Vedas are, therefore, more

intimately connected with the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyās\* and not so much with the Vaiśyas. Hence in any reference to Ārya society the former two are specially referred to and the Vaiśyas and the rest are broadly referred to as Viś. The word 'Viś' is used in a distributive sense as is clear from other Rgvedic words like 'viśvasmat' and 'viśvedeva'. 'Viś', therefore, must have had the import of the rest of Vedic society. 'Viś' is a generic term and 'Vaiśya' is specific. A doubt may possibly arise here why the words 'Rājanya' and 'Vaiśya' have not repeatedly been used. The answer is that different words connoting the same meaning in a language have different degrees of importance at different stages. It may not be that in the Rgvedic age the words 'Rājanya', 'Vaiśya' or 'Sūdra' had the same significance as in the post-Vedic stage. It is likely, that the words Brāhmaṇa or Vipra, Kṣatriya and Viś were more popular and hence more liberally used. Words like Rājanya or Sūdra do not suggest the recency of the Four-Varna system, but a comparatively recent popula-

\* In the gāthās of Zarātushtra (Zoroastra) such a division of functions has been specifically mentioned where the respective functions of Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyās have been cited and all the rest have been put into one common category.

अईरयमाहे खण्डुग दाताइशा अधहत ।

थे वेरेजेनार्द दद्य उहीम दातकस्तीम् ॥ गाथा ४९।७.

"What does a Brāhmaṇa or what does a Vaiśya avail ? He alone counts who contributes to the military strength of the community "

—Gāthā 49-7

Airayama i. e Brāhmaṇa

Khayathuh i. e People born at large (from खय to fight)

and Berejenai i. e Kṣatriya

These words are indicative not of a class but of Varna. It is a peculiarity of the concept of the Four-Varna system that the task of fighting is that of a single class. In any other time or clime, all classes had to be mobilized. The above meanings are not mine, but are commonly accepted by the Parsis. Is it to be supposed that among Parsis of that age there was neither a peasant class nor a workers class ?

rity of these words. If in pre-Purusasūkta literature the 6th verse of the 113th hymn in the first mandala and the 35th hymn in the 8th mandala or such other passages indicating the existence of the Four-Varna system had not been present, or if words like 'Brahma' 'Kṣatra' and 'Viś' had not connoted human groups at all, or had connoted one and the same quality prominent in human groups, then words like 'Rājanya' and 'Sūdra' would not merely have smacked of novelty but would also have indicated new meanings and would rightly have given rise to doubts. But in the absence of the above 'might have beens', it is no use asking why the same words have not been repeated. Is it not a fact that even the word 'Rājanya' in the Purusasūkta becomes gradually less and less frequent, yielding place to the current word 'Kṣatriya'.

Among the two difficulties raised in this controversy on the Four-Varna system, one is "why elsewhere in the Rgveda (besides the Purusasūkta) there is no distinct reference to the Varnas. If properly enunciated, the difficulty means "why there is no specific mention of the "Brāhmaṇa Varna" or the "Kṣatriya Varna". It has to be observed, that those who raise such difficulties have not at all taken into account the character of the Rgvedic hymns and of their compilation into Rgveda Samhitās. Let such objectors point out even a single occasion in the Rgvedic hymns where there is a patent need or a mention of any such word indicative of Varna. The Rgvedic hymns are not works on household rituals, or historical records or scientific treatises. They are collections of hymns, or psalms or prayers, or poems or songs. Is it at all reasonable to expect, that in general works of such a character a specific mention like "a person belonging to the Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya Varna must be made by the poet, and that a common reference like 'a Brahmin' should not suffice? Much rarer is an occasion of such a type, when the literature is meant for members of the community itself. Such

a thing may occur while referring to foreign groups as it has actually occurred in the Rgveda (e.g. people of the Dāsa group or people of the Krisna colour). But there is no reason whatsoever for such an expression to occur in hymns and prayers and panegyrics proceeding from a devotional sentiment. Even the references in the Rgveda to Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Viś and the communities indicated thereby are incidental. There was no reason for any deliberate mention, as the object was not to tell something about those communities. Such a reference has come in the course of descriptions. It is extremely unnatural, therefore, scrupulously to expect that the reference must be such as would satisfy a modern sceptic, for it is unreasonable to expect this in a collection of poems. Without elaborating this matter any further, I shall content myself by saying that such scholars should point out the imperative need in the Rgveda for a specific denominational mention (*including the word Varna*) of Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya and Vaiśya. In that event alone, can such a doubt have some value. Or else it is not possible to go on exploring all possibilities of satisfying all possible doubts.

In my view there is one more passage in the Rgveda besides the Purusasūkta describing the purusa (man) in the form of society, where the word 'Varna' must needs be taken in a denominational sense. It could as well have been omitted and yet, it is quite natural to use it there, against the background of the sentiment expressed. And it has been so used. The passage उमौ कर्णीकसित्य पुणोऽः (I, 179-6) occurs in a hymn where, as the historical tradition of the Sūkta literature tells us, the Varnas - Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya are mentioned. This hymn bears it out. Some scholars insist that the Āryans and non-Āryans were uplifted by Agasti in this hymn. There is not a single place in the Rgveda, where marital connections between the Āryans and the non-Āryans are mentioned. In the hymn, there is a distinct account of the wife praying

to the husband for progeny, and Agasti gratifying this prayer out of a desire to beget some. We cannot, simply therefore, connect this hymn in any way with the Dāsas or non-Āryans. The words उमी कर्णि (both the Varnas) are distinctly connotative of the Varna and in the light of the historical fact that Lopāmudrā, Agasti's wife, (who alone is taken to be the author of this hymn) was the daughter of the King of Vidarbha, one has to say that both the Varnas, namely Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya, are clearly indicated by this word, i. e. Varna. Is such a reference not quite natural, even from a poetic stand-point? I shall not enter into a discussion whether the word 'Varna' is here connotative of a class. If it is said that both the Āryans and the non-Āryans called Dāsas are referred to here as being uplifted, it is not possible to imagine so in view of the Rgvedic attitude towards the Dāsas. There are certain independent hymns by Agasti himself, but even they do not reveal any favourable attitude towards the Dāsas. The tradition says that these two Varnas are the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, and one need not disregard it without sufficient cause. It is sheer perverted logic to disregard it, unless some one puts forth direct proof contravening it, but the logic in this case is all perverted. One person postulates a notion, another bases a different notion on it, and taking this second notion as his basic framework, a third one pushes headstrong to found a 'historical' (?) truth. On the one hand, Sāyanāchārya is blamed for putting only a qualitative interpretation on a passage while on the other hand, the occasional denominational interpretations offered by him in good faith are summarily rejected as resulting from a religious bias. Words distinctly connoting Varna are brushed aside because they are not considered to constitute a distinct mention, while if there are words with such a distinct mention in the Purusasūkta, they are regarded as no references as they have not already occurred in the earlier nine Mandalas! Such is their absurd logic adopted in this

study. Really speaking, Sāyanāchārya is more unbaised and well-intentioned than modern scholars. He might have insisted that words like 'Brahma' and 'Ksatra', should, as far as possible, be interpreted in a denominational sense but his actual conduct is just the opposite. He has, as far as possible, offered qualitative or connotative interpretations. He has interpreted the 'parśu' and 'prthu' in the Rgveda, along with similar other words like 'viśanin', 'Bhalanas' (from Bhāl, a famous kind of arrow) etc. in a straightforward manner in a connotative sense. But those who interpret the words 'prthu' and 'parśu' in a denominational sense have not that much ground to bank upon. In any case the period of the compilation of the Rgveda can nowise be brought nearer than 3,000 B. C. The actual composition of the hymns must have preceded it, at least by a millennium. It is highly doubtful whether names like Parthians and Persians were at all in existence at such an early stage. If the very names were not in existence how on earth could they be used in the Rgveda in a denominational sense, and how could the picture of the Indo-Iranian culture as painted in the Maharashtrian Encyclopaedia possibly be authentic?\*

Another important question in this controversy is, "What evidence is there to say that there was

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\* Pāṇini knew the word parśu, not as people of a particular nation but a band of warriors. Even a foreign scholar Zimmer says that these people were inhabitants of the south-west of Central Asia, that is of India. In Pāṇini's age Iran had admittedly come in contact with India as a nation through commerce and other pursuits. It is supposed that soon afterwards Darius conquered a part of India (What this means is problematic). The Editor of the 'Bundahis' published in the 'Sacred books of the East Series' gives a specific note that "India does not here mean actual India. Wherever Brāhmaṇas and Buddhists were found the Parsis called that place India", and these people had spread as far as Bactria in early times. Why should Pāṇini, in such circumstances, mention them as a minor community though he knew even the Yavanas. In my view even in the Avestha, Parsis are not referred to as parśu or paraśee.

the Four-Varna system in the Vedas though it might have been there?" Even this question illustrates the perverted logic referred to earlier. Really speaking the question should be, "Is there any positive evidence besides the usual evidence of non-mention, to say that the references to Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas and to three or Four-Varnas in the Rgveda are indicative not of the hereditary Varna but only of the classes?" And so long as no one comes forth with such positive evidence, even according to the methods of inference acknowledgedly treated as authentic by the science of logic, "is that evidence of document and custom?" Custom is a witness regarded as reliable in any court of law and no reasonable person has any right to brush aside a conclusion reached with its help. If the law of inference has no place in the so-called science of history, then such a blatantly unjust science of history has no value whatsoever. Leaving alone the track of logic, if a fantastic guess is accepted as authentic because a particular scholar (be he Indian or foreign) cannot bring himself to accept otherwise or does not like it or does not merely feel so, the less said about the crippled intellect of such people, the better.

Let us now proceed to see if there is any basis to say that the four-class system of the Rgveda was only a hereditary Four-Varna system. It must first of all be borne in mind that the Rgveda, as already pointed out, is not a systematic scientific treatise, but a poetic composition. Even this poetry is miscellaneous and its nature is that of a compilation made with a particular point of view. Again, whatever portion of this compilation is available is also incomplete. The Sarvānukramani itself bears out that a thousand verses have been lost. There must even have been more compilations than one. This is why the order of the verses in the Aitareya do not agree with that with the Śākalasamhitā. Such is the nature of this work. All allusions and references in it have occurred incidentally. It is not possible that they should be as

explicit as desired, or numerous. These, again, do not suggest an absence of the hereditary Four-Varna system, nor even contain a single reference which would suggest even by implication the absence of the system. Such being the case, this problem has to be tackled on the basis of other incidental evidence. Sāyanāchārya, whose brain was singularly free from the modern fad, has despite the liberty his intellect has taken, followed the line of tradition and prefers to offer connotative rather than denominational interpretation of words. In view of the importance of this fact, his commentary has to be taken as authoritative. It must also be borne in mind, that in a work of such a character, it is not the frequency of references but their import which is to be valued. (Persons who on the slightest basis of a single word 'manā' in the Rgveda—in the passage 'sachā manā Hiranyaya', (VII, 9-2)—jump to establish marital relationship between the Rgvedic Āryans and Ārcadians, need not find any difficulty in accepting this ! It must further be remembered, that the Vedic people have been claiming that their culture has from times immemorial up to date been rooted in the Vedas. In view of all these facts let us see what conclusions can be drawn.

The chief criterion for deciding the date whence the Four-Varna system became hereditary, is the provision of intermediate Varnas. Unless the Four-Varnas have a hereditary basis there is no occasion for an intermediate varṇa to arise. The number of classes in society might increase or decrease in any proportion for social convenience (for instance the Romans had seven such classes). But in order that there should be injunction that there must be *only four* principal Varṇas in society – neither more nor fewer – and that any progeny born of inter-marriages must not be mixed up either with the next higher or lower class, but must constitute an independent intermediate varna, the Four-Varṇa must necessarily have been founded on a hereditary basis. This hardly

needs any further elucidation. It is singularly remarkable that there is no such instance of pronouncedly intermediate classes in the history of any nation of the world. The very existence of such an intermediate varna is an unmistakable indication of the existence of a hereditary Four-Varna system. In the Śukla Yajurveda, in the course of a description of human sacrifice, the names of different persons to be tied to different sacrificial posts have been cited, this list includes Sūta\*, Śailusa, Karmāra, Rathakāra, etc. and the same have been devised as sacrificial beings of different varieties. It is obvious that these names are denominational and not occupational,† because in

\* It is also natural that the word 'sūta' might first have been merely occupational in connotation and might subsequently have become denominational. But in that case, it would have remained in language merely as denominational and professional and would not have connoted mixture of castes. In all ages, inter-varna or inter-class marriages have been looked down upon. The progeny from such marriages might certainly have been looked down upon - though they might have taken to the profession of charioteers - and an independent word might have come into existence to connote them. Since the word 'sūta' has come to acquire the meaning of 'a charioteer' born of a Kṣatriya to a Vaiśya woman, it is manifest that the denominational sense must have preceded the occupational.

† Even other words must have been indicative of hereditary communities, just like 'sūta'. If such was not the case, some other specification along the list of human victims of sacrifice was imperative in the Yajurveda or the Taitirīya Brāhmaṇa. Human sacrifice is no joke. It is a matter of life and death. The faintest insinuation of it would actuate persons to abandon their professions altogether. There would necessarily have been some explanation about the duration of service of a person in a particular profession in order to treat him as a human offering. People of that age had no prejudices of today in their minds and need not have been ashamed to make such a clarification, and yet mere names of intermediate varnas have been given, which suggests that even followers of minor professions were brought up in hereditary tradition or else a lifelong wiry veteran in the specified procession would have escaped while a careless person of even a day's standing in the profession might have been sacrificed.

the Yajurveda there are distinct references to the Four-Varnas and it is not scientific to say that a sacrificial being should be one out of these four following a specific profession. It is, therefore, clear that in the age of the Yajurveda the hereditary Four-Varna system - and consequently intermediate varṇas - had become a fait accompli. Out of these some like Karmār, Bhisak or Sailūsa have been referred to in the Rgveda and there is no evidence to suppose that these names must be taken to connote occupations alone and not community. If the Four-Varnas and these other names mentioned in the Yajurveda also occur in the Rgveda, what difficulty is there in saying that they occur there in the same sense as in the Yajurveda. Even the word 'tvastā' or 'taksan' occurring in later literature, also comes frequently in the Rgveda. There is no basis, besides the unfounded postulate that the Rgveda contains no mention of the Four-Varna system, to suppose that these words are not denominational in import. Accepting for the sake of argument the convention to treat the Yajurveda as being of later origin on linguistic evidence, there is no ground for regarding the Yajurvedic culture essentially different from that of the Rgveda. The Rgveda clearly mentions the horse sacrifice treated in the Yajurveda I submit, that just as this Yajurvedic institution dates even prior to the Rgveda, several items appearing to be new in the Yajurveda are also pre-Rgvedic in origin. The only difference between the Rgveda and Yajurveda is a difference in outward character dictated by the different purposes in compiling the hymns in either. The Four-Varna system has been distinctly mentioned if only once and has been incidentally referred to on several occasions. The Yajurveda contains verses from the Rgveda. The two Vedas are thus cognate in character. The meanings of the above words used in the Yajurveda have remained exactly the same in later Samskrt, that is, even after a lapse of 3,000 years. What objection

could there be for Rgvedic words coming down to the Yajurveda in the same sense? Even matters of minute ritual observances like *Paryagnikarana* (circumscribing the sacred fire with a water line chanting some mantras), dropping water around the plate before dinner, and sipping a palm full of water at the beginning and at the end of the meal have been continuously and scrupulously followed throughout the five millenia. There is, therefore, no difficulty in accepting that Rgvedic words occur in the Yajurveda literature in the same sense. This is what is most palpable. Even the common supposition that Yajurvedic culture was different from the Rgvedic, does not stand to reason, in the light of the definition of culture I have offered. Western scholars have no clear concept that in one and the same culture there may be different modes and a variety of objects of worship. They, therefore, find themselves confused at the slightest semblance of a difference and begin to dream difference in time, clime, culture, race and the like and begin to imagine borrowings and admixtures in culture. They resemble the upstarts like the bourgeois gentleman in Moliere's famous comedy. That Rgvedic culture is founded on principles can easily be understood even from the few illustrations cited in the preceding chapter. When there is no natural difference between two cultures as regards philosophy, science and general social conditions, it is not logically valid to say that they differed only in this major item. If there was at all an unprecedented revolution in the history of the whole world during the period intervening the ages of the Rgveda and Yajurveda it certainly, must not have taken place all of a sudden, and, even according to the line of thought of these very people certain literary remains reminding us of this intervening crisis ought to have been found in the intermediate period. In any case the Yajurveda ought to have contained some portions reminiscent of it but there is nothing of the kind whatsoever. I, therefore, repeat that the

traditional view that in the Rgvedic period the Four-Varna system was not only prevalent but founded on a hereditary basis in the Rgvedic period, is correct I need not take special pains to reinforce this view. The onus of producing evidence to prove, that the allusions to the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda are against the principles of a hereditary Four-Varna system, or that the rituals etc. of that system described in the Rgveda are opposed to the foundational science of the Four-Varna system, rests on those who raise objections to my (and to the traditional) view. Unless and until such a thing is done there is no reason to be taken aback at this so-called unfounded 'science of history'. It is a different matter with those who, for reasons of their own, find the very notion of Four-Varna intolerable, and who, therefore, refuse to see it anywhere, right from the ancient Vedic period down to modern literature. But why should they be perturbed if it is found even in the Rgveda ? They can laudably emulate their masters like Gandhiji who, as soon as he was confronted with an allusion to untouchability in the Chhandogya Upaniṣad, plainly stated that he did not respect the work and it could certainly redound to their credit to do so, for it calls for honesty even to profess so, openly.

Let us now sum up the main propositions expounded in the course of this chapter.

1. Any conclusion regarding the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda can only be arrived at on the strength of evidence from outside.

2. There is no direct evidence in the text of the Rgveda to assert that the four classes in the Rgveda were not definitely the hereditary Four-Varna system.

3. Even modern scholars like Ketkar have now begun to admit, that hereditary brahminhood had come to be a fait accompli as early as the period of composition of the Rgvedic hymns

4. Sayāñachārya says that the words 'Brahma'

and 'Kṣatriya' occur in several Rgvedic passages in the denominational sense

5. In the Purusasūkta there is a distinct mention of the names of the Four Varnas and a poetic description of their respective functions

6. The epithet 'Brāhmaṇa' in a hymn of the 7th Mandala has been used in the definite sense of Brāhmaṇa Varna

7. In the hymn by Lopāmudrā in the first Mandala, there is a distinct reference to the *Anuloma* kind of marriage (a marriage in which a man of the higher Varna marries a woman of the lower one)

8. In a hymn of the 8th Mandala the names of all the three Varnas occur with descriptions which agree with the metaphors in the Puruṣasūkta.

9. Three or four names of intermediate Varnas mentioned in the Yajurveda, also occur in the Rgveda. In the Yajurveda they connote a denominational and not an occupational sense

10. There is practically no essential difference between Rgvedic and Yajurvedic cultures.

11. The very existence of intermediate Varnas suggests a hereditary Four-Varna system

12. In a work of the character of the Rgveda that is, one of compilation, the frequency of a reference is not of much significance. Even a single reference (like that to the Yajurveda in the 5th Mandala) is of great value.

13. There is not much point in asking why the very words 'Rājanya' and 'Śūdra' have not been repeated. At the most it would mean that these words were not much in use in that age.

14. European scholars lay exclusive emphasis on non-mention; but non-mention or non-availability does not mean non-existence.

15. In the case of cultures, like Vedic culture, which are rooted in philosophy and are enriched by cosmology, of which only fragmentary literary relics have come down, the absence of a mention of a thing may as well indicate not merely the existence but

even a great familiarity with that thing (Just as exception proves the rule). In order to prove to the contrary the case of a non-mention must be of the nature of non-existence in logic.

These are then the chief criteria to draw conclusions in this controversy. To use a metaphor from Law "the Four-Varna system need not be called upon to adduce more evidence in its favour as all the other points together with the right of prescription are on its side. The onus of proof lies entirely on those who refuse to recognize the right of the Four-Varna system in the Rgveda. Finally all historical inferences, based as they are, on the very unfounded notion that there was no Four-Varna system in the Rgveda naturally topple down.

#### APPENDIX

After this portion was written I happened to read a book entitled "the Four-Varna System" by the late Shree Talwalkar which, too, follows a similar line of thought. I am not writing this appendix to lay claim to any originality of ideas. I have no objection if they are treated as borrowed All, I wish to point out is that even two writers, unknown to each other, happen to think alike if they only do not go by the leading strings of Westerners but employ their own pure reason, and how their common thoughts are likely to contain the truth I commend the late Shree Talwalkar's book to the reader. He has dealt more on this question especially from the sociological standpoint which I have not dilated upon, since I have studied it from the standpoint of research My position is that the tradition of the hereditary Four-Varna system must be traced back to the Rgveda, as the tradition is seen to be continuous up to the Yajurveda. Moreover there is no vital difference between Rgvedic and Yajurvedic culture. Those who deny its hereditary character refuse to take into account even ordinary facts and cite illustrations at random. They lay exclusive emphasis

on exceptions. Take for instance the story of Satyakāma. Some points have to be taken into consideration in studying it. Satyakāma was grown up at that stage. His mother says that he was born to her in her youth. She was a woman of loose character. If Shree Śankarāchārya did not put this interpretation on the passage, it was due to his nobility. Even if we accept his view namely that she forgot her clan because of incessant work, it is still obvious that she was not a Brāhmaṇa woman, otherwise he would not have remained uninitiated, that is, without a thread ceremony, till his mother was grown up enough to say, "You were born to me in my early youth". In other words, it was an instance of *Anuloma* progeny. Even if we take it that the Upanayana conducted by Harita was a bare thread ceremony, it reinforces the *Anuloma* character. Or else, a Vrātyastoma ceremony would have preceded the Upanayana (I personally feel that Harita, without conducting the Vratabandha sacrament initiated him by prescribing worship of the cow, fire etc and made him practice penance by keeping him away from himself for four years. But, as he was born of a Brāhmaṇa he must have undergone that sacrament at a later stage. It is mentioned later that he was entitled to study Mantha-vidyā). Be that as it may, the relevant point is, that the existence of intermediate varnas presupposes a hereditary Four-Varna system. Students of this system must take the following seven points into consideration —

1. Why are there a handful (five or ten) of instances in the course of thousands of years of change in the varna through a corresponding change in functions?

2. What is the nature of this function? Who brought about this change? Is there any evidence regarding this?

3. What earthly reason is there for the rise of the intermediate varna, if the varna was not hereditary, but could alter according to customs and duties, attributes (*gunas*) and functions (*karma*).

4. If it is said that varna was determined by external attributes and functions, what was the nature of the science which did it. How is it that there is no specific provision in the Sāstras regarding the person who could do it, the circumstances in which he could do it; and the consequences if the choice went wrong.

5. The maintenance (protection) of the varnas and āśramas is cited among the duties of the king, which would have meant that the king had to see that the varna was determined properly. How is it that such a function is nowhere prescribed ?

6. In the Dāyabhāga, the portions of pure and mixed progeny are differently assigned. How is it that there is no provision for the treatment of two sons of the same father who might have acquired different varnas ?

7. The joint family was the order of the day in early times. How is it that there is no provision governing the conduct of two brothers who returned from the preceptor's hermitage after having been assigned different varnas.

The reader would easily make out for himself that the above objections referring to non-mention are from the legal point of view of the nature of non-existence.

Note.—It was the Rgvedic practice of specifically mentioning Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas and putting the rest of society under one category. This is why the other varnas have not been specifically mentioned, as already been pointed out. The Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad bears it out. In chapter VI, Brāhmaṇa III, the Manthavidyā is detailed. In the oblations to the fire the Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya are specially referred to while all the rest are included in the 'Viśva'. That there were Four-Varnas in the age of the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad is beyond any controversy,

## SIX

### THE RGVEDIC AGE : ( BHĀRATIYA ATTITUDE )

Upto this stage I have given a glimpse of the studies carried on by different scholars in the Rgvedic age. In this chapter I propose to consider briefly the Vedic point of view. I have considered this question at great length in my work 'reorganisation of Vedic Culture' which I shall first epitomize, before coming to the main point. It has already been stated in the last chapter that if the Vedic people if at all were proud of anything, it was of their language and their power of speech. They knew two kinds of speech, namely, divine and human (*vide चत्वारिंशाकृतिमिता पदानि* ; I, 164-45). This passage has variously been sought to be interpreted. But if we take the statement '*तुरीयं वाचो मनुष्या वदन्ति*' ; e. "the fourth kind of language is spoken by human beings, while the first three kinds are superhuman and are known only to learned Brāhmaṇas" in its proper context of the elucidation of spiritual knowledge, it is but proper to interpret it as connoting the four types of speech, namely, Parā, Paśyanti, Madhyamā and Vaikhari. The only difficulty in this interpretation is, that these four types of language have not been specifically explained in the Upanisads which are treated by modern scholars as ancient works. Even the Upanisads do dwell on the importance of 'speech' but do not clearly state the four kinds. The Māndūkya Upanisad states the four stages of the soul and tries to state the correspondence between them and the four 'padās' of the

sacred letter Om. Really speaking, this subject is included in this discussion but no celebrated teacher (for instance Śaṅkarāchārya, Rāmānujāchārya or Madhvachārya) seems to have analysed it, because of their inherent nature of handing things down by oral tradition alone instead of embodying them in the form of written books. Even Gaudapādāchārya, in his 'Kārikās' (Aphoristic Verses) has paid particular attention only to the first half of the Māndūkya Upaniṣad with a view to supporting the doctrine of Māyā. Nevertheless, this subject is included in their discussion. It appears that the Upanisads, which discussed the Vedānta, might not have tackled this subject, as it relates to practical study. Sāyaṇāchārya has picked up only the necessary meanings (from his point of view), having the ritualistic character of the Vedas before his mind, and has ignored the other aspects. For instance take the expression गद्यविहन्य्. (I, 108). He has interpreted it only as हविप्रश्नेऽकै होतुभि । Really speaking this word, namely, 'asura', as used here is highly problematic and deserves careful consideration as already pointed out in the last chapter. Let us take another illustration. In this passage (III, 7-1) the words 'विविशुः सप्तवाणीः' are used about God fire. Sāyaṇāchārya has without entering into deeper waters rendered it as running or flowing rivers. It appears that Shree Patwardhan the author of 'Sruti-bodha' too could not agree with this meaning and has therefore merely printed it in bold type, keeping it as 'saptavāṇī' without bothering to interpret it, to indicate its importance \*. In this passage, are mentioned the types of speech which no one pronounces, but which emanate from the operation of the seven diffe-

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\* The word 'vāṇī' does not occur in the Rgveda in the sense of speech but it connotes it in later Samskr̥t literature and is hence likely to have a long history behind it. Even in the Rgveda the words 'vāṇī' and 'vāṇa' are used in the sense of a musical instrument. The seven kinds of vibrations, of the

rent cosmic ‘planes’ and which are realized or visualized by Sādhakas who have acquired the attainment of those respective heights by Yoga or penance through what is called the ‘Sabdānuvīdhā Samādhi’ i. e. what are called *Vyahrtis* (भूर्ज भूत् etc) Sāyanāchārya has done a similar thing in interpreting the hymn beginning with the words ‘Asya Vāmasya’. Be that as it may I do not propose to dilate more on historical discussion in the present chapter but just desire to find out the attitude of the Vedic people.

In their view speech has the power of creation but this power is not realized in and out of season (literally i. e. in any manner whatsoever). Of these four kinds of speech only one, namely, the ‘parā’ is alluded to in a passage in the Rgveda ‘ता विश्वरूपं पश्यो वदन्ति । (VIII, 100-11). Since it corresponds to the ultimate state of the soul described in the Māndukya Upanisad it is inherent in beings of all species That is why the passage characterizes it as Viśvarūpa. But it is unmanifested (*mandrā*). In the preceding verse it is termed “देवाना रथी” and it is said to have showered lustre and milk on all sides. It cannot be said that this is the characterisation of the power of speech of the human being, since, in the Rgveda, the distinction between God and man, divine and human, is made quite clear in a number of places.

The word ‘*Veda*’ indicating Vedic verses also occurs in the Rgveda It is mentioned in the passage य समिष्यते आहुति यो वेदेन दग्धते । (VIII, 19-5) This verse like the following one is very beautiful The author of the Śruti-bodha confusing the word ‘*Veda*’ has given *Jñāna* (knowledge) as its synonym But there is no reason

(Continued from page 161)

basic substance are termed ‘sapta sindhu’ or ‘dhenu’ The seven types of speech (sapta vānī) referred to in the passage सप्तस्वसारो अभिसप्तस्त्रन्ते (I, 164) mean the same All the description viz

यत्र गवा निहिता सप्तवाणी । or  
एक गर्भं दधिरे सप्तवाणी ।

is consistent enough

to reject Sayānāchārya's interpretation, namely, the study of the Vedas. In the celebrated verse 'ऋचो अश्वे परमे व्योमन्। (I, 164-39) it is said that in the verses (*r̥chās*) reside not only this material world but even the celestial powers which cause it and work it. Since the verses (*r̥chās*) are thus glorified in the Rgveda itself, there is no objection whatsoever to interpret the word Veda as "together with the study of the Vedas", or better still, "with a proper pronunciation of the Vedic verses". One who knows how to enter also knows the way out. One who is capable of understanding how celestial powers reside in the letters of the Veda can alone know how to transform them into phenomena. One who does not understand the secret, whatsoever, to him Veda always remains a collection of verses. This very verse proceeds to say यस्तत्त्वेन किं ऋचा करिष्यति! viz. such dry-as-dust logicians should only masticate the bones and please themselves with blood (the socalled research) oozing from their molars. It is the foundational and unshaken faith of the Vedic people that the Vedic verses (*r̥chās*) with immanent power were not made by anybody but have emanated by themselves.

It raises a problem why the Rgveda should be treated as emanated by itself (*apauruseya*) despite the fact that several material developments have been described in it and that on several occasions the author of the hymn himself claims to have composed a new hymn. I have attempted to satisfy this doubt in my earlier Marathi work 'The Reorganisation of Vedic Culture'. But the problem is not peculiar to the new age. Thinkers from earliest times had to confront with it. Great scholars starting from Kautsa and Yāska, to a recent person Prof. Jinsiwāle, have discussed it and are still discussing it. Really speaking emanation and human construction of the Vedas are not only, not contraditories like light and shade, but are a happy and judicious combination like that of fire and water which are naturally opposite to each other. This controversy has been termed 'mantrā-

r̥thavāda' in scientific works. In the science of mantra, we have nothing to do with the meaning whatsoever. The sole importance attaches to a specific sequence of words, but there is no harm if, in maintaining this specific succession of words, the words are so collocated as to yield intelligible sense also. This subject has been elucidated more clearly in my aforesaid work with an illustration from the science of music. 'The chief aim of music is to rouse a particular sentiment in the heart of the hearer. The science of music is powerful enough to create the appropriate sentiment in the mind of man and thus through the particular melody to lead him to what is known as the Bhāvasamādhī so as to enable him to acquire certain attainment (Divine powers). Now, this power of different Rāgas consist in the peculiar order of the seven notes. The different combinations of the seven notes bound by rhythm and arranged in a peculiar fashion give rise to Rāgas and Rāgnis which are so constituted that they touch the heart of a connoisseur and arouse cognate sentiments there. These different arrangements though discovered by the genious of man, are independent of him, self-emanated and hence eternal. These notes may be pronounced in three ways. Either a mere vocal tune, embodying some arrangement of notes like ma, ga, re, sā, evokes the pathetic sentiment in the human heart, or the actual conventional words like ma, ga, re, sā - devoid of any meaning - denoting the notes may achieve the same end, or thirdly, in place of these tunes or notes words full of meaning like 'my sweet darling' may also be used. This is why when a musician of repute is singing a standard song we can fully share the joy of music even though we may not understand a word of what he sings. Now the collocation of notes which evokes the particular sentiment - which is in fact the essence or real meaning of music - is eternal while the use of particular words in the song is of a non-permanent character, and hence may be of

hundreds of thousands of kinds, and in any of the different languages. This is, briefly speaking, the content of my discussion in my earlier works.

The view of the Vedic people is that the structure of the Samskr̥t language and words follows, as far as possible, this eternal relation between the notes and sentiments, as pointed out above. When they call the Vedas self-emanated and term them as *mantras* what they mean is that the peculiar order of words in the 'mantras' follows the rules of the science of the "creative power of sound." As these rules are self-emanated and independent of human creation, the 'mantras' are also in a sense so because the author of the 'mantras' has no real independence in the choice and arrangement of words. If it is understood, that a word has weight, then a word with the requisite weight—or to speak in modern parlance—a word with the requisite density, velocity and energy of the sound to be pronounced must be put in a particular place. Now, in a language, there may be several words, each having several meanings or several words having one and the same meaning. The author has the limited liberty of choosing one of those synonyms and in that limited sense, we may call him the author of the mantra. The Vedic people hold that if the Rsis (sages) in the Vedas had styled themselves authors of the hymns it is only in this limited sense. It is obvious that such collocations of words, like technical terms in chemistry, may not have a popular intelligible meaning, but the possibility need not be ruled out. Let us imagine that in the chemical formulae, the numerical figure stands for the vocal note. Suppose the most common formula  $H_2O$  converted into Vedic terminology will be  $\text{HO}$ . This could be interpreted in three ways. The first meaning would be 'water', the second a peculiar combination of two atoms of hydrogen and one of oxygen. Both these meanings are technical and would not be understood by non-scientists. But this very collocation (i. e.  $\text{HO}$ ) is capable of being interpreted as an exclamation.

meaning 'Hulloa' or 'wait a little' and is thus capable of conveying a popular meaning. It is quite possible that, while citing a major rule in chemistry, putting together words having a popular meaning, some popular sense may intentionally or non-intentionally be happened to be conveyed. Since the English language is an odd admixture, it is least likely to create such a miracle, but in a language like Samskr̥t in which every single letter of the alphabet is pregnant with meaning, especially inner meaning, this is no miracle whatsoever. This, in fact, redounds to the greatness of that language.

Since the Samskr̥t language has largely, if not wholly, been created with reference to the original, natural laws of the creative power of verse, the Vedic people commonly held that the Vedic mantras may at one and the same time have a transcendental and a popular meaning and hence a self-emanated and a conventionally created character. This very notion is conveyed in the words जन्मा अद्वे परम् चोमर् ! in a hymn composed by the sage Dirghatamas who out of sheer modesty, calls himself ignorant. I say 'composed' in a popular sense but according to the point of view of the Vedic people the celebrated sage had not to make even that much effort. It just came to him. One need not suppose that this meaning of the word 'rk' has been recently invented with the help of modern Vedānta. Slight traces of it are to be found, more or less, even among the people who seceded from the Vedic Āryans. When I say this, I only mean, that though they understood the idea, they did not utilize it or that in their cultural tradition the idea is not embodied and yet even unconsciously some trace of that idea has naturally been left among these people, and this, too, suggests that the word is of the Vedic age. Take the Greek word 'logos' which is manifestly descended from the Vedic word 'rk'. Although the word 'logos' came to convey different meanings at a later stage, its original import was the "word which expresses the thought in the mind of

God about the world, both before and after its creation" (Ranade's English-Marathi Dictionary). Even this shows how lofty and serious the attitude of the Vedic people was about the letters of the Vedic verses from very ancient times. We should bear this attitude in mind, while irresponsibly asserting, on the casual similarity between Greek and Vedic mythology, that the idle Vedic sages (!) described natural phenomena in the form of allegories of deities and poured into it their devotional sentiments. It is likely that Pāndurāng of Pañdhari and his two wives Rāhee and Rakhmābāī might originally have been human beings, but if a person asserts, in spite of the poems of Jñāneswara and Tukārāma that these poets have simply described human relations, it shows the utter poverty of his imagination and not the real state of affairs of those times. Like the Vedas, the attitude of the Vedic Aryans towards Vedic deities was also of a special kind. Whatever be the primitive state of man, in the Vedic period at least, the attitude of the Vedic people towards their deities was purely deistic and its tradition has been carried on for generations as the Rgveda bears out. The word 'tridhātu' frequently occurs in the Rgveda but its meaning is still ambiguous. Some people interpret it as 'consisting of three qualities'. The words 'rājas' and 'tāmas' occur several times in the Rgveda but not in the sense of the terms in Sāṅkhya philosophy. A famous Marathi writer confused the words 'rājas' and 'tāmas' occurring in two different verses of the hymn of creation, and says, on the basis of dichotomy, that the three qualities, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas are indicated there. But it does not appear to be correct. The category of rājas which he imagines as existing between 'tāmas' and 'sattva' is initially wrong.\* In

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\* All these qualities are independent, and in the Sāṅkhya terminology there is no intermediate category whatsoever. If one of the three qualities had been an intermediate category, it would by itself have managed the whole universe without the pairing out of the three qualities.

a division by dichotomy no such intermediate category is possible. For instance, if we were to divide the whole world between Āhitāgni Rājwāde (the writer) and the rest of the world, where is the possibility of getting up an intermediate category and if at all an average between any two other things is to be shown then why bother division by dichotomy? The same is the case with his commentary on the 'Hymn of creation', but that is not our present subject. The point is that since the Rgveda does not contain the Sāṅkhya concept of the three qualities the word 'tridhātu' has presumably some other meaning.

Although the Rgveda contains descriptions of several types of deities, it also contains references to . "THAT WHICH IS THE ROOT OF ALL" It has already been pointed out, that, at any rate, so far as the Rgveda is concerned, it is not just to decide the truth or falsity of a thing merely by the number of times it occurs in the text. The Rgveda is after all a work of compilation and this compilation has not been made from a mere historical or cultural point of view or from any other particular point of view including an exclusively religious one. It is a collection of hymns useful for the worship of and devotion to different deities and even these hymns are not, as it were, part of a logical syllogism and hence it is not at all important how frequently a particular reference occurs. The fact which is important is that it occurs at all. Take a familiar illustration. Suppose a thousand years hence the writings of the late Lokamanya Tilak are discovered and studied critically by a future researcher. Suppose he discovers therein that the word razor hardly occurs in that connection. Would he be justified in rushing to the conclusion that a razor must not have been in use in the age of Tilak, and in drawing an imaginary portrait of him with a long beard and rolling locks of hair? The same is the case with the study of the Rgveda. It contains descriptions of the One or the That, of different deities, the earth, the

heavens, the different worlds and even what lies beyond. It appears therefrom that they knew a threefold cosmos, namely, metaphysical (*adhyātmika*), other worldly or transcendental (*adhidaivika*) and material (*ādhibhautika*). They have used the words "tridhātu prthvi" or "tridhātu teja" only in this sense. The concept that every entity, from the grossest material to the subtlest fundamental principle is constituted of these three layers, was elaborated only at a later stage. The forms of worship and devotion of the Vedic people follow a system which adheres to this principle and this is why it has become necessary to use a special form of grass (*dūrvā*) in the worship of Ganapati and a special kind of leaf (*bilva*) and a special type of dried fruit "Rudrākṣa" in the worship of God Śiva. In other words the deities or devas of the Rgveda are not mere mushroom growths without any root in philosophy but are constituted on some scientific principles. It is for this reason that they are described as depending on human effort for their strength.

In modern scientific parlance, the instance of electric power would offer a most suitable medium for elucidating the concepts of Vedic Āryans. Although electric power is unmanent in the whole word it is not actually put to use. It may be functioning in its own natural way, but has nothing to do with man. If man wishes to use it to his purpose, he has to construct machines according to his own plans, in order to harness it to his purpose. If a poetic mind describes electric power and its utility in glowing terms after the style of Vedic Ṛsis it would not be far from the truth. At the same time, it is true, that if man knows the art of devising machines and their proper use then alone can he take advantage of it or else it will be as good as being non-existent for his purpose. Hence, the deities and human beings, from the Rgvedic point of view, are mutually dependent and capable of honouring and strengthening each other. The concept about deities among other peoples is not of this type. Even the

fundamental basic notions of the Rgveda are conspicuous by their absence among them.

Indra and other deities among the Vedic people are nothing but the different forms of Power of the One (Sat) manifesting itself for different purposes in different ways. Indra is the power of action, Surya is the power of creation and Agni is the power of knowledge. Various other deities are similarly different forms of power in the cosmos, performing different functions. The Rgveda contains hymns to Indra and Agni, more than to all others. The reason is obvious. The whole of human development depends upon knowledge and action. With these two all other things are possible of achievement. Next come Varuna, Surya and Brhaspti, because even in the functions made possible by knowledge and action, health and systematisation are essential. It is for this purpose that administration and moral control are required. The deity Varuna helps human beings in this respect. Similarly man desires that his traditions should continue uninterrupted and, therefore, takes to devotion to Surya who represents the entire productive or creative power in the cosmos. The same is the case with other deities. The seven rivers, the goddess of dawn (Usas) and all other deities are similarly parts of a highly scientific system. To deny this character of Vedic deities and to treat them merely as natural phenomena after the arbitrary fashion of the European scholars has no other basis except the obstinate prejudice that human society in the Rgvedic age was not in a cultured stage. If, however, we interpret the Vedas from the Vedas alone as suggested by Macdonnel, we discern just the contrary situation as already pointed out. It is not that the Europeans did not notice this thing, but proceeding further they devised another strategem, namely, that all the mandalas and hymns of the Rgveda do not belong to one and the same age and their indigenous 'mind-borns,' (in the words of Justice Woodroffe), whose feeling and seeing depends

on the casual utterances (such as "I do not feel so" or "it does not appear to be so") of their Western masters, began to echo this very language. Perhaps they would accept that they are the very progeny of their ancestors only if their European masters nod assent to it!

But there is an extenuating feature in this case. No one has dared to say that there has been any alteration or interpolation in the Rgveda after the stage of its compilation. Hence nobody asserts at least that any hymn, whether it is the obnoxious Purusa-sūkta in the 10th Mandala or the hymn 'Asya Vāmasya' in the first mandala was interpolated into the text after the stage of compilation. It is true, that there are some cryptic passages in the hymn 'Asya Vāmasya' but the few illustrations cited above are so direct and explicit that they have nothing to do with its cryptic character. Hence the conditions reflected in it and other parts of the Rgveda undoubtedly date back earlier than at least the period of their compilation. Nor is there any evidence besides imagination, to show that the same conditions did not prevail in the period known as the age of the composition of the Rgveda. Nor is it logical, even admitting slightly different dates for different hymns of the Rgveda, that they indicate any considerable alteration in cultural development, because it is not possible to say, that within a period of time which must lapse in order to allow such a cultural transition no other change except a few notions (appealing as new to the European researchers), or a dozen forms of words which strike the European mind as non-Vedic, took place. If it is said that no such important changes took place these hymns, though they be farthest links in the chain, would nevertheless constitute only parts of the same chain of cultural tradition. It is not that there are sufficient grounds to pronounce these mandalas or hymns as definitely posterior. The hymns in all the seven Mandalas are in the name of persons in the families of some parti-

cular rsis (sages). Such is not the case with the rsis (sages) in the first mandala. The hymns in the 9th mandala are not consecrated to different deities but are mostly addressed to Soma. This much reason is sufficient in their view, to declare the first seven mandalas belonging to an earlier period, and the 1st and the 9th to a later one. There is some reason in treating the 10th mandala as a later one, because the forms of the words in it are strikingly different. But there is nothing beyond childishness in arguing that the number of its hymns is just the same as in the first mandala and that several hymns in it begin with the words 'Agni mile' and therefore is later. One might as well advance the astounding argument that it is not the 9th but the 10th (and therefore must be later!) but this very logic would launch us into the position that the 1st Mandala (and, therefore, the hymn 'Asya Vāmasya' in it) is, therefore, provenly the most ancient. But such a conclusion is sure to strike Western scholars blind. This is indeed a strange piece of logic. Why is the hymn 'Asya Vāmasya' posterior? Because the ideas contained in it could not have been entertained in the Rgvedic age! And, pray, why would such ideas not be entertained in the Rgvedic age? Simply for the reason that all hymns like 'Asya Vāmasya' are pronouncedly posterior! Is there any rhyme or reason in this? (Or is it simply the irresponsible, childish but arrogant babbling of research infants?)

Such was sentiment of the Vedic Aryans as regards nature and deities, whether we assign it to the period of the composition of the Rgveda or to that of its compilation. As they knew the mutual inter-dependence of the material and the transcendental spheres, they naturally took it for granted, that every material happening had its repercussions in the transcendental strata. Thus arose the concepts of sin and merit, chastity, ritualistic discipline, and detailed ritual codes, like the sipping of Soma juice. Conversely, it

was also but naturally to follow that the transcendental has its effect on the material both generally and specifically. It is in this fashion that the Brāhmaṇa works unravelled several Vedic mysteries. It has already been said, that the astronomical allegories and metaphors in the Rgveda had their origin in this method of elucidation. But to jump from this to the sweeping conclusion that all Rgvedic metaphors are rooted in astronomical events alone, and that there are no other types of metaphors (e. g. spiritual); or to say that in the view of the Rgvedic Āryans it was dangerous and sinful to refer to astronomical events except through metaphors, is most unnatural, self-conceited, baseless and utterly illogical. I have illustrated how such a notion can be carried to absurdity. People with such fertile brains do not feel the slightest scruple in using events, mentioned in works thousands of years after the Rgveda, merely in order to prove events in the Rgvedic age. Have we not seen how Dr. Ketkar, in his frantic attempts to identify Sudasa in the Rgveda (dating back 4 millenia B. C.) conveniently banks on dynasties authentically (!) prepared from different works from the Rgveda down to Raghuvamīśa.\*

We must, therefore, clearly distinguish between chronology and cultural history and the place of astronomy in either. We launch ourselves in a great difficulty if we say that the Rgveda contains only stars and natural phenomena. It is childish to imagine that Rgvedic Āryans residing near the North pole were terrified with the six-month night and earnestly prayed God to lead them out of it, or that they

\* I personally do draw upon past traditions but I do assert that these traditions have come down uninterrupted. These scholars on the other hand use past works while asserting, at the same time, that the modern meanings are not the original ones and that the original meanings went out of vogue centuries before Christ. This is the leading difference between us and a similar difference may be found in other matters as well.

were so maddened with joy at the sunrise at the end of it that they devoted practically the remainder of the year—that is, six month day which might extend to ten months in extreme cases—to the performance of Soma sacrifices. There has been human habitation, if not in the region having a six-month day and night, at least in a region having a midnight sun as described in Marie Corelli's 'Thelma'. There is no inky darkness during the day for several days, let alone the present times of advanced civilization, even two millennia back, when North Europe was in a primitive state, history does not record any event of the inhabitants running away for fear of darkness or propitiating gods to relieve them from that distress. It is true that poetic inspiration may lead man to create excellent metaphors. There may also be a metaphor like the killing of Vrtra in a poem consecrated to divine exploits of Indra. But it is simply absurd, unnatural and even contrary to experience to conclude that when the Vedic sages prayed to God to lead them from darkness to light it was the physical darkness of which they were afraid, that when they saw the sun at the end of six months of helpless waiting, they felt greatly relieved, and that they sang panegyrics of sunrise under the guise of Indra's sports.\* The history of humanity for at least two millennia and a half is available today. It gives an account of man in different stages. To this day there are people who are without clothes or who barely cover their shame with leaves of trees, but

\* Sāyanāchārya has explained एतस्ये पुरा ब्रह्मगा अभेषु । as रात्रीर्धत्वेन न प्रभात भविष्यति एवैति कराचित् ब्राह्मगा भीता । Perhaps the Brāhmaṇas were uneasy on account of the lengthy nights and thought as if it were never going to dawn. But his meaning is clear. It will be absurd to suppose that Sāyan had any idea of polar nights. His meaning is very simple to understand. During the night man is naturally more helpless and at the mercy of circumstances. When in sound sleep he cannot look even after his own body. Who protects him in that state but the Almighty God? One who is conscious of this helplessness naturally desires to see the end of the night.

is there a single instance of people who have made so much of natural phenomena in their own region, or who have extolled them to the extent of identifying them with Godhood and singing their panegyrics besides merely referring to them as divine sport or exploit ? This is a patently unnatural concept. Man is so accustomed to the environments where he grows up that he does not feel its dreadful aspects as alleged by these writers. Right from infancy, he gets just inured to them and does not consciously realize its severity, whethr it is a thick forest or the desert of Sahara. The Kashmūr rose can evoke admiration only from an outsider like Prof. Phadke. The Kashmīris themselves would be found to grow so used to them, that they would be seen weeding them out. In short then, European scholars who show an utter poverty of the strength of imagination which alone enables one to adopt oneself to different circumstances, have given rise to some absurd and fantastic notions. But it is really to be wondered how accomplished scholars and logicians of repute like Lok. Tilak and Rameśchandra Dutt have blindly copied them, without subjecting them to a critical scrutiny \*

Even from another point of view, it will be seen, that this fashion to read allegories of the sun and the moon into any and every context, is fancy fad. From great European linguists to archaeologists like Rai Bahadur R. P. Chandra, the Curator of the Calcutta Museum, admit that the Rgveda contains names of certain celebrities which are celestial and non-earthly. Lokamanya Tilak says that the seven rivers mentioned in the Rgveda are non-material, celestial entities and has thus to admit that there is something transcendental behind the Saptasindhus of the Punjab. But this is

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\* It is a mistake to think all their nights are dreadful because of pitch darkness To suppose so is to forget moon Beyond 75° up to the pole moon is constantly rounding the pole. She has her own beauty as will be seen from Dr. Nausens' report

tantamount to saying that while the minor deities of the Rgveda are vitally connected with transcendental occurrences, the major deities like Indra, Agni, Varuna, Sūrya and Brhaspati which envitalize the body-politic of the Rgveda and especially Indra (which is its life and soul and his singular exploit, namely, the killing of Vrtra), were deemed as only material events, and that even the Rsis who composed the hymns also thought so. Let the reader alone decide how far it is consistent to say so. It is to be remembered that this killing of Vrtra is done by Indra again and again as the habitual present tense in the Rgveda fully bears out \*

A familiar occurrence occasions neither a surprise-nor grief nor joy, and yet these scholars say, that the Vedic people were for thousands of years continued to

\* Dr Nausen's experience is just the contrary, though it is modern. How much more lovely must the Arctic region have been, prior to the glacial crisis! "Now I am almost longing for the polar night, for the everlasting wonderland of the stars with the spectral northern lights, and the moon sailing through the profound silence. But this eternal day, with its oppressive actuality, interests me no longer"—(*Farthest North*, page 301)

"It seems to me that a very satisfactory state of feeling prevails on board at present, when we are first entering on our second Arctic night which we hope to be a longer one" (pp 325)

His description of the polar night is very interesting —

"We have the most wonderful moonlight, the moon goes round the sky night and day" p 178

"The arc lamp under the sky-light makes us quite forget the want of Sun" p 178

"These last days the moon has sometimes had rings round it, the mock-moons and axes accompanied by strange phenomena" p 185

"The arc lamp has shone like a sun today over a happy company. We had no difficulty now in distinguishing hearts from diamonds on our dirty cards" p 193

"Where the moon's thin, pale, silver sickle is dipping its points into the blood" p 181

Dr Nausen's "*Farthest North*".

panegyrize over the merely physical phenomena of the rising and setting of the sun under the guise of the Indra-Vrtra allegory. Blessed, indeed, must those intelligent and powerful beings have been whose life the Rgveda reflects, if they persisted in continuing the glorification of a bare gross material event for thousands and thousands of years!\* It is but natural to conclude that in order to account for such a happening their social and political order must have been so close and packed as one that would vie with present-day Soviet Russia ! But thus presents a further difficulty. If all these allegories of Indra and Vrtra, Diti and Aditi, Mrga and Prajāpati, Rbhu and the dogs, Śambara and Namūchi have been based on the rise and setting of the sun, how do you account for the fact that this very sun occurs in the Rgveda prominently as an independent deity and not as a mere physical phenomena. In order to account for this anomaly—that one and the same event is to be treated in two different ways and that the two deities concerned are to be worshipped in different forms,—one must allow for the lapse of a very long period. But the wonder is that the circumstances relating to the solstice indicated by these metaphors, are from a narrow chronological margin. These wonderful research scholars alone are capable of unravelling such mysteries, but even more important than this is the fact, that the Rgveda itself independently describes the constituents of the above metaphors, viz. the sun, the long period of darkness,

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\* " I think it is impossible to hold that the hymns were composed thousands of years after the stories narrated in them were first conceived " " I therefore, conclude that the legends in question must have been incorporated into the hymns of the Rgveda, when they were still intelligible "

—Orion, p 209-220

According to Lok. Tilak the probable date of the hymns is 4000 B.C. But he also says that the legends like those of Indra and Vrtra were conceived in the arctic region, that is not less than 8000 B.C. Did the society remain paralysed for 4000 years ?

the clouds, etc., as natural phenomena. It is also said that Indra himself placed the sun in the sky and removed darkness, which makes it clear that Indra was different from the sun. There is also a reference to the sun, apart from the conception of darkness (अद्वा गौवाय चक्रते आसन्ने रोहत् दिवि । 1-7-8)

From this discussion it will be clear that this theory of metaphors, despite its seeming soundness, is hollow and unreliable. The Rgveda describes several other persons killed by Indra, though the killing of Vṛtra is more elaborately described. The Occidental scholars ought to be able to explain all these descriptions with reference to the rise and setting of the sun, either daily or diurnal. Even these metaphors do involve a far-stretching of notions. Assuming they contain some astronomical truth, why is it hinted so in the Rgveda in such a round about manner and not with direct simplicity? It is not that the Rgveda cannot state astronomical truths in a direct manner. Is it not stated that though there are twelve months in the year, even a thirteenth has now and then to be calculated? (केत नातो धूरन्तो दृष्टव प्रजापतः । वेदाय उपलभेत । I, 25-8). One more fact has also to be noticed with regard to these metaphors based on astronomical events. The moon, which is even more charming than the sun, and which attracts the attention of man even more powerfully, has no place whatsoever among Vedic deities. This fact is not of less significance. It is not possible to say that the Rgvedic people failed to notice the moon. The moon is referred to, frequently, in the Rgveda. It was also regarded as extremely charming to such an extent that in their language the moon had become synonymous with what is charming. There are several references such as 'pleasant like the moon' or to the moon directly. The moon was subsequently regarded as the presiding deity of the Soma creeper, which makes some people identify the moon with Soma and the hymns to the Soma in the 9th Mandala as praises of the moon. But a careful

perusal of the descriptions of Some in the 9th Mandala and elsewhere, would show that the allegorical character, if any, has a spiritual basis. It has nothing to do with our familiar moon. The moon is also independently referred to in the 9th Mandala (शनि मह पुरथदस्य रात् । IX, 81-7). Rgvedic Soma, then, is not the same as the moon. It is, therefore, pertinent to ask why if the Rgvedic Aryans deified all natural phenomena, happened to exclude the moon alone ?

The concept of the Vedic people about Indra and other deities has its origin in the cosmology manifested in the Vedas and it is their belief in keeping with this notion, that these different celestial powers maintained contact with man in various palpable forms if he makes proper scientific attempts. The Rgveda abounds in such palpable manifestations of deities. Indra is yellowish-fair. Even his horse is of a yellow colour. He resides in heaven and in his house is his wife Indrāṇī who was later termed Śaci in the Purānas. In his house there is charming music (कल्याणी जापा सुरण गृहे ते ।). He can assume the human form and can naturally, therefore, be credited with human sports All these descriptions of Indra throw the modern researcher out of gear and he in his turn and according to his point of view, thinks that all these notions indicate an imperfect stage of man's development. The fact of the matter, however, is that all notions are prevalent amongst us, even today exactly, in the same form We may, therefore, be called as imperfect as the Vedic Aryans were. The Vedic Rsis have sung the glories and sports of Indra and other deities with the same love and devotion with which the saints of Maharashtra have sung of Pānduranga of Pandhari - reaping vegetables for his devotee Sāvatā, the gardener, or Śripād Shri Vallabha of Kuravapura punishing the thieves and protecting his devotee. The late Rajaram Shastri Bhagwat has put forth strange notions based on Indra's different names like Pākasthāmā. It is nothing but the effect of a "dissociation from

Indian thought effected by English education", as pointed out by Justice Woodroffe ('The Serpent power' page 239). Really speaking, if several Indras are mentioned in the Rgveda the only conclusion to which this leads is that the concept of incarnations, which matured at a later stage has also its origin in the Rgveda.

The purport of all the above discussion is, that there is no appreciable difference between the Rgvedic and the modern sentiments even of special classes, not to speak of the masses in general. Let us now see what the views of the Vedic people were about the age of the Rgveda. They were perfectly right in saying that the Rgveda became manifest according to the self-evolved postulates of a natural science. They also believed that it has no beginning. Of course, the word 'beginningless'\* is to be interpreted in consonance with the self-evolved character of those rules. The Veda, which is infinite, fell into the hands of a man in a finite form. There is an end to man's own knowledge of the Vedas. In the same way, if we take it in the sense that the Rsis (sages) visualized Veda, it does have a beginning. It is not possible to trace this beginning in the literature of the Vedic people. In their view, Shree Vedavyāsa prepared the present compilations by collecting extant hymns, at the beginning of the Kali age. They do not hold anything beyond this about the age of the manifestation of the Vedas nor have they at any stage wished to know more than this. The age of the Vedas as determined by Occidental scholars

\* Even our traditional Sciences have accepted that the Veda though beginningless and endless has both a beginning and an end from the point of view of its manifestation. It is well-known how Yājñavalkya obtained new Vedic hymns from the sun. It is equally obvious that there must be a different beginning in the case of the manifestation of various verses and hymns. Cultural study is concerned with this beginning and end. It has nothing to do with the controversies of mīmāṃsakas. We do read in the mythologies (Purāṇas) of the destruction of several portions of the Vedas.

at about two to three millenia B. C. by their fine logic is naturally convenient to their prejudices. It is not determined (as MacDonnel says) in consonance with the Vedas. Scholars like Prof. Jacobi, Lokmanya Tilak, Prof Dass, and Shri Pavagi have made an attempt to determine the age of the Vedas in consultation with the Vedas themselves and this age is now generally fixed at about 4 to 6 millenia B. C. Let us see if there is any other evidence, besides that of the metaphors within the body of the Rgveda itself, for, we have already seen how inadequate the evidence of metaphors and allegories is.

Two or three things very frequently recur in the Rgveda in the course of hymns to deities. The first of these refers to the unsteadiness of mountains\*. The Rgveda frequently contains descriptions to the effect that formerly the mountains had wings which enabled them to fly and that those wings were clipped by Indra and they thus were made stationary in one place in order to stabilize the unsteady earth. Metaphors apart, this passage can yield only one direct meaning. This description pictures some period when earthquakes must have constantly shook the earth rendering life difficult. There have been earthquakes in different parts of the earth in all ages, but it is not that the above memory refers to any specific part of the globe. Vedic Rsis (sages) had a fair idea of the extent of the globe. The Vedas contain descriptions of the extensive earth and how it was limited by God. They also contain a description of the four seas. The references in such passages to the earth, therefore, are not confined to any particular region but are common to the globe as a whole. Similarly the earthquakes which are indicated by the winged mountains must have been on a colossal

\* If we were to utilize the evidence of modern geology . incessant and terrible earthquakes, changes in the surface of the earth, deposits of different periods and the like to prove how old Indra must be, we had better give up the attempt! The science itself is extremely uncertain.

seale. In other words this is a reference to a period when there were great transformations in the structure of the earth not merely by meteorological causes like a glacial deluge but by deeper, i. e. geological factors, and the changes must have been of considerable extent. It is worthwhile remembering, that this idea is not to be found in any other literature.

It is necessary to say a few words about the four seas mentioned above. In the Rgveda the names of mountains like the Himalayas and rivers like the Sapta Sindhu in the Punjab, the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Sarayu and the Gomati alone are mentioned. No other names are mentioned. Modern scholars, argue from this that the Rgveda was composed in the Punjab alone and the people therein had practically no knowledge of India and other parts of the rest of the world and rush to the conclusion that Rgvedic Aryans had no knowledge of the sea, or at any rate, even if they knew it by hearsay and folklore they had not actually seen it. It is quite possible, that the reason, why the Rgveda does not contain names of rivers in provinces other than the Punjab, may be different from their supposed ignorance of other provinces. In the first place, there is no certainty that the Sapta Sindhu of the Vedas are only the Punjab rivers. Lokamanya Tilak has said that they are celestial currents. It could also be argued, that the Rgveda mentions only those rivers which were regarded as the most sacred. Even today, a person residing on the bank of any other river, takes the sacred names of the Ganga and Yamuna at the time of taking a bath. The whole calculation has gone wrong because of the general mention of a few specific rivers in the Rgveda, thinking that five of those rivers are only from the Punjab. The instance of the word 'samudra' offers an excellent specimen of how Occidental researchers put forth all possible wild ideas, just to gratify their deep rooted prejudices. The Rgveda refers to the sea a number of times.

There are one or two references to the four seas and the 10th Mandala mentions both the Eastern and Western sea. But these patent references to the sea do not go well with the favourite thesis of the Occidental scholars. They, therefore, set up an idea that the Rgvedic Aryans must have been calling a portion of the Indus, south of the Punjab, as sea or samudra. What a wonderful stratagem ! And there is sufficient reason for inventing such a stratagem. There is no mention of fishes and fishermen in the Rgveda ! We have already seen, that these blessed research scholars solely emphasise non-mention on each important occasion, but that non-mention has practically no importance in a general work of compilation like the Rgveda. Assuming that the names of the rivers are only from the Punjab, this peculiarity might arise because the compiler has adopted his own favourite policy in piecing these hymns together. These Rsis (sages) were very much enamoured of the Indus. They used to navigate its waters. It must indeed, be a great miracle how their boats were confined only to the upper part of the Indus - stranger still - how they never even thought of reaching its mouth. It might be argued that they could not reach its mouth, because that region was dominated by people of some assumedly opposite culture like the so-called Indus valley culture. But this presents another difficulty. History does not provide any instance of a nation incessantly involved in war for hundreds of years. Carthage and Rome were at daggers drawn for several years, and yet, there was intermittent communication between them. If the people belonging to the opposite culture living on the lower course of the Indus were so powerful as to exclude even such a possibility of intercourse then it raises a further problem as how they did not extirpate the Aryans from the Punjab during these hundreds of years. As will be clear from a passage quoted from Sir John Mashall in an earlier chapter, they were pacifists to the

extent of seeming ignorant of warfare as established by the evidence of the Indus Valley excavations. To sum up then, once a person is obsessed by an idea he neglects other aspects to a ridiculous extent !

If it is understood that the number of references to a particular item is not as important as the very fact referred to in the work of compilation, one has to admit that the Vedic Āryans had not only a knowledge of the sea but of four seas and hence of the entire extent of the globe across the seas. The terms "the four seas" and the eastern and western seas are sought to be explained away as some celebrated oceans in the heavens while the word 'samudra' is sought to be interpreted as the lower portion of the Indus. But there is no need, whatsoever, for imposing a metaphorical sense to these references as the meaning is very direct. Even Sāyanāchārya interprets it as the sea on the earth and says that the Ṛsi (sage) is praying for supremacy over the four seas. This is perfectly consistent. One special trait of Sāyanāchārya, if we leave alone his view of the Rgveda as ritualistic is that, since he has no modern fads in his brains he does not obstinately insist on interpreting dogmatically any particular word in any particular sense. He, therefore, plainly and in a straightforward manner gives the meaning, which appears to him to be proper in the light of the traditional knowledge available to him. He has also interpreted samudra as heavenly sea. Just as this meaning may be in keeping with the earlier works, so must the meaning of the four seas be, and it should, therefore, be unobjectionable. The five Punjab rivers, and perhaps the Saraswati, which are supposed to be ancient, join the Indus. But even others, besides these seven rivers, have been mentioned, and it is not that all of them joined the Indus alone. There are general references about all such rivers in similes such as "just as the rivers meet the sea" (समुद्र न स्वत आविशन्ति) This shows that they were very well acquainted with

the sea. There is also a reference to maritime commerce. There are stories of boats with hundreds of oars and of 'bhujyu' drowned in the sea. It cannot be denied from these stories that the Rgvedic Aryans definitely knew the sea. We have to expect, therefore, that the Vedic Aryans had an idea of the Bay of Bengal, a knowledge of the four seas and a notion of the extensive earth. The reason for dilating on this point, even at the expense of strict relevancy, is that it is an excellent specimen of the argument in circle, common in the writings of European scholars. Just as the Rgveda happens not to contain a reference to fishery, simply because there is no compelling reason for the compilation to have a reference to it even so there may be several other things that are not mentioned but which were well-known to them. My object in writing this is to bring this home to readers. This involves repetition but it is occasioned by the almost exclusive emphasis of Occidental Rgvedic studies on non-mention. A work of compilation has another peculiarity. Non-mention has certainly no importance in it, but its contents are also determined by the compiler's point of view and circumstances. If he has made the compilation from a particular point of view, it will contain only such information as is relevant to his object. In the absence of such a purpose, if a compilation results from a piecing together of similar small compilations it is natural that the original compilers might have had a circumscribed view of things. The subsequent, i. e. major compiler adopts a general policy in selection of his material in order to fit it into his mould. Or else, such a compiler may have special regard for a certain thing which dictates the nature of the contents of such a compilation. We should remember this while inferring the extent of the country merely from the names of rivers, provinces and villages in the Rgveda. According to the editor of the Maharashtra Encyclopaedia, the Rgveda must have undergone three compilations, two of which are patent. The seven Gotra Mandalas suggest that

some families had their own compilations. The Soma Mandala is patently an independent collection. Shri Vedavyāsa has made his compilation by taking these ready collections and augmenting them with the miscellaneous hymns in the first Mandala and with socially useful hymns in the 10th Mandala \* Because of the Rgveda being such a compilation it is just possible that even several seemingly ordinary things have not been mentioned and some parochial references have been embodied in the work. Just as students, who wish to press the Rgveda into the service of some conclusions, ought to remember its dual character i.e. metaphorical and cultural on the one hand, and temporal on the other, similarly, they must also pay due attention to these specialities of the character of its being a compilation.

Let us now come to the main subject. The description of the Soma plant is another means to prove how ancient the Rgveda is. Soma was then found in plenty, and although the sacred plant on the Munjāvat mountain was regarded as par excellence, it must have been grown elsewhere, as well in abundance. Or else, we shall have to say that the whole Rgveda was first composed within a few miles of the Munjāvat mountain. But it is obvious from its plentitude, that it grew in any place. There are references showing that girls who were going by the way found Soma and instead of using it for themselves, they offered it to God. Soma had to be purchased. But, this is not enough to say that it was rare. Even today there is a feeling that one must not pluck several roots, though available in plenty. The plentitude of Soma is borne out by

\* It is commonly supposed that the present arrangement was made by Shri Vyāsa but it does not mean that Shri Vyāsa composed the hymns. It is said that he divided a major work into four parts but it cannot be said that in so doing he did not add any new verses. I have said from this point of view that Vyāsa made the compilation.

the frequent descriptions of the gushing currents of Soma. It appears that the Soma plant emitted a sound when being crushed. Its growls have often been described. Parsi works mention 'Hāom' but they could not longer identify the plant like the Vedic people of today. The gushing currents or the growls of Soma do not appear in the Avesta. It is, therefore, clear that the Parsi revolt started, when Vedic Āryans had forgotten the Soma and used it only as a symbol in a miniature form. We have, therefore, to say that the Rgvedic hymns were composed long before the Avesta as it is found today.

This forgetting of Soma by the Vedic people is an important event in the history of the Vedic people as it reveals a major revolution in their history. When the tradition of the Vedic hymns, the deities described therein and sacrifices like the Aśwamedha (horse sacrifice) remained intact, how could Soma alone be forgotten though it was the very sap of their life? If it is said that the plant could not be carried while migrating from one place to another or that it did not take root in the new home, we have to accept the position, that the Vedic Āryans did not bring Soma with them when they came to the Punjab. If it is argued that the Rgvedic hymns were composed outside India then how could a unique plant like the Soma\*, though known to and cultivated by the Āryans, be altogether lost to them. It is really a riddle why it did not, as an article of religious and ritualistic use, persist, at any rate, as a unique drink? If it is argued that the Rgveda was composed outside India, at least slight traces of its highest basic philosophy should have influenced the culture of the people who remained behind. This does not seem to be the case. If it is further argued that only the tradition of crushing the Soma has come from outside, while the philosophy

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\* Soma is not a mere stimulating or intoxicating drink. It can be proved from the Rgveda that, as described by Patanjali in his Yoga Sūtras, it had the power of securing high attainments.

connected with it was built up in India, then such a hypothesis also has no basis whatsoever, at least today. No means are available from the Rgveda to separate the Soma from that basic philosophy. Both these pervade all the mandalas in equal proportion and there is no other means beyond imagination to analyse or elucidate them. The most important point then is that there was a unique plant like the Soma available in abundance where the Rgveda had its birth, irrespective of the fact whether the Rgveda had its birth in India or outside, and that this plant suddenly disappeared at a later stage.

Nor can it be asserted that the Soma disappeared by slow stages, either through human neglect or through other natural causes. A nation as a whole, cannot afford to neglect such an important thing, so intimately bound up with its life. On the other hand, there is evidence to show, that it tries its level best to maintain its traditions. It is thus patent, that the sudden disappearance of the Soma did not take place in the natural course but was wrought by some accidental circumstances. Modern theories of geologists show, that, it is possible that they were victims of such a calamity. This calamity is none else than the glacial crisis which drove the Aryans from their colonies in the North Pole and made them confine themselves to the Indian borders getting disconnected from their outside empire. Although the Himalayas had their peaks covered with snow even prior to the crisis, it is possible that their condition was far different from today. Communication with the outside world towards the west must have been much more easy then than it is now. The glacial crisis must have had different effects on different parts of the whole globe from the Arctic region to the Tropical.\* If extra snow accumulates on the

\* Where there was no actual snowfall, there might have been excessive rainfall. I feel that occasions of this type have come down in the form of Puranic metaphors like the excessive rainfall caused by Lord Indra and Shri Krṣṇa, the child, sheltering the people under the hill.

Himalayas its effects are felt right up to Berar, even today. Such a glacial crisis must, therefore, have resulted in closing down all routes of communication through these mountains on the border for centuries together, and, though they might have been restored several centuries later, it is a patent fact that to this day there are no other routes besides the already existing two or three. Although there might actually be no snowfall in Indian territory below the mountains, the severe cold must have had its effect bringing about permanent changes in climatic conditions. Places like Badri Nārāyana have always been regarded as sacred and important from early times like those of the Mahābhārata. It is a well known fact how difficult a pilgrimage to this sacred place was even a few decades back. In ancient times, when it was customary not to fell trees, this region must naturally have been very difficult of access, and yet, such places were regarded as sacred and important which proves that this importance dates back to an age when the peaks of the Himalayas and the plateaux thereon must have been fit for human habitation. This habitability of the Himalayas must also have been destroyed by this glacial crisis. It would be reasonable to suppose that Soma disappeared from the region on account of this major and sudden crisis and the climatic transitions resulting from it. Since the Rgveda pictures the abundance of Soma, it must naturally be prior to this glacial crisis and has therefore been properly called by the Vedic people as belonging to time immemorial.

In addition to the above evidence, the proofs given by Dr. Abyanas Chandras and Shri Pavagi (based on certain Vedic passages) as to how India first became inhabited and how human beings were born there alone, are worth taking into account. Even writers adopting the method of examining astronomical allegories in the Rgveda, have shown that the Rgvedic age was prior to the glacial crisis. I think, in view of the defective character of the method of studying astronomical

allegories, it cannot be taken as authentic. But though the method is not to be adopted, its way of putting things must be taken into account. We should here consider an important factor among others which comes in the way of taking the Rgveda age so much farther back. Some of the names found in the Mahābhārata and Puranic literature are also found in the Rgveda. Scholars like Dr. Ketkar have tried to determine the age of the Rgvedic composition from the names of dynasties in the other works on the basis of similarity with these names. He is not mindful of the precautions already pointed out in this work which a student of the Rgveda should remember in making such an attempt. But even according to his own method, he himself is not quite satisfied as will be seen by any reader. The reason is that in the first place the Puranic dynasties are neither complete nor consistent, and, though in some cases their tradition is shown as unbroken, it is by leaping over long intervals of time and piecing together the names of only the most celebrated persons. Their inadequacy even from other points of view has been pointed out by the Editor of the Maharashtrian Encyclopaedia himself. While using these dynasties he has formed an opinion on the basis of the supposition that the Nila of the Uttarapāñchālas was contemporary with Sudāsa of the Solar dynasty. Even after pronouncing the dynasty to be unreliable, he has fixed the periods of Yayāti and other kings, assuming these dynasties to be continuous which constitutes a major flaw in his argument. He has also taken to far-fetched arguments to reconcile minor inconsistencies. There is no evidence in the Rgveda to regard Santanu and Devapi as brothers, except that they are mentioned together. On the other hand Devapi seems originally to have belonged to the Brāhmaṇa class.\* Even Sāyanāchārya and others had to face this difficulty, but they had trust in God's grace and

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\* See appendix,

came out of it ! The science of research, which would have no truck with God in any form whatsoever, must naturally tumble over this point Rgvedic names like Vrddhahśrava, Divodāsa, Sudāsa are found also in the Pūrānas in the Uttarapañchāla dynasty. No trace of this dynasty is however to be found in the Rgveda. There is one more difficulty to be confronted From the Purānas it appears that before the Uttarapañchālas other dynasties known subsequently as Sūrya and Chandra flourished in the Punjab. Names of other dynasties like Videha and Kāshi also occur. A question may be raised, according to the method of these modern researchers themselves, how the hymns which were being composed for hundreds of years have nothing to do with any of these dynasties ? The Editor of the Maharashtra Encyclopaedia has had to rack his brains and had recourse to several somersaults to find his way out of the labyrinth, resulting from the Rgveda mentioning Divodāsa as Puru, Sudāsa as Bharata and confusing names like Yadu, Druhyu, Anu, Puru and Turvasu and yet in the end he has to say that the two names have been used probably because one and the same dynasty had at different stages different names. The only difficulty in accepting this view is, that people have not had the history of these respective dynasties coming down through an unbroken tradition If there was such a tradition, no such confusion would have arisen Besides, as pointed out above, Pargiter in preparing his dynasties and fixing chronologies has utilized all kinds of material, from the Rgveda to the Raghuvamśa, consisting of works by all communities, and information through different sources and different stories But, even if we accept the conclusions of the Editor of Maharashtra Encyclopaedia, we are still confronted by an anomalous position.

To start with, the Puranic view that all these dynasties originated from Manu, is taken as entirely authentic If it is authentic, why does Dr. Ketkar breaths a sigh of relief, that the Rgveda eschews

the appendage of Chandra and Sūrya tagged on to these dynasties by the Purānas ? If the Purānas are authentic in saying that Manu was the source of all dynasties why should they be disbelieved, when they say that the whole of the humanity originated with Manu, in whose time even the deluge took place Does he accept the Biblical view that this world deluge took place about four to five millenia B. C, since according to the dynasties Manu dates about 2,000 years before the battle of the ten princes ? Moreover, he identifies the Sudāsa of the battle of the ten princes with the Sudās of Uttarapāñchālas. If it is said that Rgvedic culture evolved after this Sudāsa, it is obvious that there was a different culture before. Even he is of the view that the Sūta Literature is prior to the Rgveda. The period (and the rulers) when the so-called transfer scene took place in the history of Indian culture and these rulers must have been of paramount importance How they are then not described in the Sūta literature ? Why should the authors of that period, singularly free from the motives, prejudices and sentiments of the modern researchers, not unashamedly mentioned that all the rulers before the battle of the ten princes belonged to an inferior (non-mantric) culture In fact, all these were uniformly of the Vedic tradition and devoted worshippers of Indra and other deities, some of them like Māndhātā had direct connections with Indra. Several of them are described to have performed "a conquest of the quarters" followed by the performance of the Aśwamedha sacrifice The story of Hariśchandra and Śunahṣepa went down in the name of Indra and Varuna, several years before the battle of the ten princes emphasised by Dr Ketkar himself. It does not seem that it is possible to satisfy such questions as If all these kings and the anecdotes above referred to belonged to a non-mantric culture and deal with devotees of non-Vedic deities, when did the epoch-making revolution to convert all of them

uniformly to the Vedic cult takes place, and what the formidable reason for it was? How was it possible for them to make such a revolutionary change in all their literature? There is yet another difficulty. Dynasties Sūrya and Chandra, whatever their names be, flourished in the Punjab for as many as sixty generations before 'Sudāsa'. In his view the Āryans had proceeded, at the most, up to Magadha in the East and to Rajputana in the South at the time of the battle of the ten princes. Were then the empires of Rāma, the son of Daśaratha, and of Sagara, described in the Purāṇas confined only to the province of the Punjab? Were the victorious invasions of the Haihayas mis-attributed by the Brāhmaṇas to Paraśurām<sup>(1)</sup> confined to the narrow strip of land from Jamunā to the Jhelum? Again, the culture of the regions, where great royal dynasties prospered in succession for sixty generations and had stable histories, must itself have been great and its independent relics must also have been left behind. If they remained in the Punjab for such a long time, but could not invade a single portion of India, they must really be pronounced incompetent. Even if we take all these things for granted, there still remains one more difficulty to be confronted.

Lokmanya Tilak has shown from the astronomical evidence, that the period of the Maitreyani Upanisad must be about 1,700 B. C. This age must be treated as authentic, as it is based not on an allegory but on a direct reference to the astronomical position. Since this Upanisad quotes from the Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad the latter must have preceded it. Lokmanya Tilak places it two centuries earlier. The Chandogya and other Upanisads are prior still. But it is difficult to understand why he has placed the earlier limit for Udagayana in the latter half of Dhanisthā at about 1600 B. C. instead of 1680 B. C. as said before by himself. Thus the age of the Brhadāraṇyaka comes to be 1800 B. C. to 2,000 B. C. at the latest. The Satapatha dates back

earlier still i. e. about 2,900 B. C. on independent grounds In the Brhadāranyaka a question is asked about the location of the Pāriksitas and an enquiry made about their condition after death. It is obvious that the novelty of this story must lie in its freshness i. e. at the time of the Brhadāranyaka this story was recent. The Brhadāranyaka is, therefore, contemporaneous with Janamejaya. There is a controversy about the identity of the Pāriksita but without entering into it let us take this to be Janamejaya III. Janamejaya II flourished twenty generations earlier. The battle of the ten princes was fought three generations earlier. Both Pargitar and Dr. Ketkar allot fifteen years to each generation Let us allot twenty instead. This takes us five-hundred years before the Brhadāranyaka, when the battle of the ten princes must have been fought. Thus the Satapatha and the battle of the ten princes become contemporaries and the Rgveda dates after the Satapatha, if we are to follow Ketkar's view that the Rgveda was completed after the battle of the ten princes. Even if we take the Brhadāranyaka to be recent, Yājñyavalkya's history contained in it may be of the period of the Satapatha Let us go 500 years earlier than the Satapatha. Is it possible that a large and varied number of events, such as the battle of the ten princes, the growth of the mantric culture, the composition and the march up to the Brāhmaṇa literature, not to speak of the invasion up to the Bay of Bengal and Vidarbha by people who settled down in the Punjab for thousands of years without moving an inch further, "the depopulation of villages in the west and the prosperity of the common people in the villages of the east", narrated in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa together with the two or three compilations of the Rgveda indicated by Ketkar, could be crowded within the narrow span of 500 years and if so how would modern research digest it ? I think it is for Dr Ketkar to answer this question

The fact of the matter appears to be, that Devodāsa and Sudāsa in the Rgveda are two indepen-

dent persons and have, therefore, different family names. It is an accident that Sudāsa is called an ancestor of Devodāsa. Sudāsa was the son of Pejavana and even among his ancestors was also one great Devodāsa which may account for it but there is nothing strange or miraculous in it\*. Besides these two names the Rgveda also refers to families like Yadu and Trtsu and others. But they are uniformly unknown names. It is a problem why, though before the battle of the ten princes there were such large stable families and heroic personages as shown in the dynasties, none of them are mentioned in the Rgveda. The wonder of wonders is, the preceptors of these great kings were from the families of sages like Vaśista, Viśwāmitra, Gautama, Bhāradwāja, Jamadagni and Atri mentioned in the Rgveda. The research scholars have been misled because of Devodās and Sudāsa or Vrddhahṛṣava found among them were not found among the Uttarpāñchālas. These names do not occur in the same order in any dynasty except the Uttarpāñchālas. It is more possible that these Uttarpāñchālas had nothing to do with the battle of the ten princes and that they had borrowed these names from the names in the battle of the ten princes. The case is the same as the name Āpida in Kashmir is derived from names like Chandrāpida, Muktāpida, Jayāpida, in Bāna's 'Kādambari'. To ignore this and to bring the Rgveda down to 3,000 B. C. through a confusion caused by Devodās and Sudāsa is like fixing the age of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva, from the date of the victorious King Kṛṣṇarāya of the Rāstrakūṭas. No doubt, the Yādava dynasty and their residence in Mathurā would come in the way of such a surmise but like the fairy spirits in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer night's dream' who could change men's skulls at their cruel

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\* It will be seen from the dynasties in the Brhadāraṇyaka that the same name appears again and again at frequent intervals. These dynasties are important from the historic point of view and are discussed in the Appendix.

whims, a miraculous power has been given by the parasitical public of today to the research scholars of Europe and their disciples. In fine, as already pointed out, there is no historical evidence to determine the age of the Rgveda unless one entertains like these Western scholars any amount of imaginative postulates and presumes that there is nothing unnatural in this process. To repeat once again, in the present circumstances, at any rate, there is no means to determine the age of the Rgveda.\* It is yet unknown The age of the Rgveda is as infinite as the infinite Vedas. The credit for creation of events in such an unknown sphere can rightly be given only to God! In view of these facts the view of the Vedic People that the Rgveda is self-emanated, beginningless and self-evolved is no doubt full of meaning

After having discussed the Rgveda at length it is necessary to say a few words about its compilation. It is said that Shri Vedavyāsa compiled the Vedas and divided them into four groups at the beginning of the Kali age According to tradition of Vedic astronomy the commencement of the Kali age is placed at about 3,000 B C. Today the Kali age is 5,051 years old. There is a good deal of controversy on the beginning of the Kali age Shri C. V. Vaidya has taken this period fixed by the Vedic astronomers as authentic According to Lokmanya Tilak it must be placed in 1500 B C This idea is supported only by the unauthentic dynasties of the Purānas and the gospels of foreigners whose actual works are not available Even these gospels have not come down to us in their original The work supposed to be authentically Ptolemy's has itself undergone two rescentions I personally agree with Shri C. V. Vaidya in this respect. The Brhadāranyaka and

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\* European scholars complain about the same thing even after much ado about research Winternitz is right when he says "We cannot hope to fix a terminus a quo whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1,000 or 3,000 B. C. No power on earth will ever determine"

and Śatapatha are thrown asunder. Though this is true the episodes in Yājñyavalkya's life given in the Brhadāranyaka must have taken place at the time of the Śatapatha as there is not much interval of time between them. The Pārikshita mentioned in the Brhadāranyaka must have been a few years. This subject has been discussed in detail in the appendix.

#### APPENDIX

Yāska himself does not say that Devāpi became a Brahmin. The Bhāgavata and other Purāṇas say that he was a Kṣatriya himself and would create a Kṣatriya dynasty in the Kali age. The words of the 'Nirukta' are that he practised penance, but it also proceeds to say पुरोहितस्ते असानि याजयानि ३। If these words are not correctly understood a confusion arises. The reference in Śāntiparva must have been the result of such a confusion. The use of the root 'As' here is most important. If the sense was "I shall be the priest and get a sacrifice performed by you" then either the root 'bhu' or a similar one would have been used. The root 'as' is rightly used here. The word 'purohit' here is puzzling. It is not one word and must be split into two Devāpi struck a via media here. "I shall sit before you and get a sacrifice performed by you." By his sitting before (i. e. at the head) Devāpi established his seniority and Śantanu was proved to be a mere representative. Thus his defect\* was washed off as the passage clearly shows. The Mahābhārata says Devāpi and Śantanu were brothers since both were sons of Pratipa. There is no evidence to suppose that the Śantanu and Devāpi of the Rgveda were brothers besides their names being mentioned together (Mahāśāstriya Encyclopaedia, Vol III). Devāpi in the Rgveda was the son of Ristīṣena and had not himself offered to become a priest but was prevailed upon to become one (X. 98-4).

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\* While the elder brother was alive Śantanu could not perform the sacrifice according to the behests of religion. This was the difficulty and Devāpi removed it by thus making him his agent.

What Ketkar says, namely, that Ristūṣena, Ititasena etc were names of Pratipa himself, is not improbable as there could be such names. There were actually such names among the Śatavāhanas but the question is that the Rgveda does not prove that Devāpi himself became a sacrificial priest nor does the Nirukta say that he directly became the priest and conducted the sacrifice. Sāyana's word क्षत्रियः is most important.

Yāska's words about Devāpi are quite clear and very important. Durgāchārya missed their importance and, even after saying that Devāpi refused to be a king, he interprets the word 'asāni' as 'bhavāni'. According to Yāska, Śantanu pressed Devāpi again and again to take the kingdom i. e. even at that time Devāpi was only a Ksatriya entitled to become ruler. But Devāpi instead of saying "I have become a Brahmin; I shall therefore not be able to rule", suggested the above via media. This, too, proves that he was Ksatriya.

## SEVEN

### RGVEDIC CULTURE : THE VEDIC OUTLOOK

We have seen in the last chapter the attitude of the Vedic people towards the Rgveda and the Rgvedic Age and have also seen how it is justified. Even a modern scholar like Bābāsāheb Patwardhan who was absorbed, for the whole of his life, with a study of the Rgveda, has remarked that, "when we see the wild European guesses about the Vedas, we are inclined to think that the orthodox traditional shastris and pandits, who never bothered about interpreting the Vedas are a thousand times better"\*. In view of this remark one can understand the essence of the Vedic outlook. Let us consider in this chapter the outlook of the Vedic people on Rgvedic culture and its origin.

The last word† in the modern science of research may be said to be embodied in the conclusions of Dr. Ketkar, the Editor of the Maharashtra Encyclopaedia. I am paying particular attention to them as he has ransacked the entire Vedic literature with the help of all available means, before forming his opinions. There is a saying in Samskr̥t that when the chief wrestler is vanquished the defeat of the rest is taken for granted. If Ketkar's views being representative of modern scholars are convincingly refuted, the others

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\* Śrutiśodha (Marathi translation of the Rgveda) Introductions to Mandalas XIII & IX

† This does not mean that none has done research after Ketkar but only means that research as a whole has not marked any appreciable advance

need not be separately considered. Of the two conclusions which are the quintessence of all his discussion one has already been considered at an early stage. The other conclusion is that the literature on the Rgvedic mantras does not all belong to Indian Aryans but was created by Indians at a subsequent period and that the Brâhmaṇa literature is a connecting link between the old Sûta literature and the new mantric literature. Other notions such as "This literature belongs to the Aryan people who advanced from the west to the east" are in keeping with his fundamental conclusion. From the discussion up to this stage the reader will easily notice two patent mistakes in his line of thought. The first is the undue importance which he has attached to the battle of the ten princes and the second is that he has missed the point that, as stated before, culture has two stages. The character of a culture in the perfectly deductive stage is different from that in an inductive stage and has therefore to be approached by a different method. He has forgotton that the culture reflected in Vedic literature belongs to the deductive stage. On account of these two shortcomings, though he has gone nearest to the truth, he has, like Gautama Buddha, started off in altogether opposite direction. I have shown the fiasco of the battle of the ten princes in the last chapter. This battle contains nothing to prove that the invasion was from the west to the east. During the battle of Panipat it so happened that Bhâoosaheb Peśwâ, then in position of suzerainty over the whole of India, had to encounter opposition in the crossing of Yamunâ, southwise. Is it, therefore, reasonable to say that Bhâoosaheb was defeated while invading India from the north? Equally unreasonable it is to say that when Sudâsa came eastwards after fighting a battle on the bank of the Indus or after crossing the Parośni, that he invaded India from a foreign region. Let us imagine that the Bharatas came from the ultra-Indus region. It is difficult to see how it helps to

solve the present problem. Nor is it easy to understand, even if the literature of the Rgvedic mantras is proved to be posterior to the battle of the ten princes, how the culture of the incoming Āryans would be provenly different. Culture is not a mushroom growth. Literature holds the mirror up to it. Government orders may cause a difference in the affairs of a people by a stroke of the pen. But such is not the case with literature for it cannot overnight create a new culture. It is, therefore, futile to say that the Rgvedic hymns were written after the battle of the ten princes and that a new culture was created as reflected in them. In the Rgveda alone there are plenty of references to the very ancient culture of the composers of the hymns. The Rsis are proud that their ancestors have, for as many as seven generations, attended on the deities of their devotion. Even Dr. Ketkar does not say that the literature of the Rgvedic mantras was produced outside India. Rgvedic culture is, therefore, admittedly prior to the battle of the ten prices. There is no evidence whatsoever to suppose that before the battle of the ten princes, the cultures of the people on either side of the Indus were different from each other. As late as the Mahābhārata war the ultra-Indus religions in the Asian continent were regarded as part and parcel of Bhārat ( i. e. India ) and, despite a few variations in modes of conduct, they were treated as being under the sphere of influence of Indian culture. Till recently, i. e. up to the Sasani kings, even foreigners\* shared the same view. They used to refer to Afganistan, Bactria and other places as the Indus provinces. The name of the

\* "Where ever Brāhmaṇas and Buddhists lived ( as they did in Bactria ) that land was considered a part of India in Sasanian times " ( Prof West, *Bundahis, Sacred Books of the East*, page 59 ) If this was the condition in the Christian era there need be no doubt what it was like at an earlier stage Gāndhāra was patently a part of India and Balhika has already been mentioned.

Indus province occurs in the writings of Darius and others, and hence, this subtle fact ought necessarily to be remembered by those who imagine from this reference alone that the entire portion of India was occupied by the Parsis and jump therefrom to the conclusion, that any event or dynasty in India might be connected with Iran. In other words, what cultural significance is there, when the people within and outside the country belong to the same culture? If one of them invades the other either on the occasion of a horse sacrifice or out of political ambition, how can it prove an entirely different culture?

If the culture of Rgvedic mantras was prevalent before the battle of the ten princes how could it be held that only its literature came to be created at a later date. How can a culture last unless it has a literature, whether in books or in oral tradition? The existence of a literature has, therefore, to be taken for granted Dr. Ketkar purports to say that the culture of the Rgvedic mantras was developed somewhere outside India where alone its original literature also developed. But this means that as soon as the Aryas came to India, they left that literature behind, produced a new one, and the Aryans who had earlier stabilized in India, and who were as advanced as the newcomers, abandoned their own Sūta culture and tacitly adopted this new culture. The Rgveda, at any rate, contains nothing to support such an idea. There are various difficulties in supposing that Rgvedic culture developed outside India. In that case the Rgveda would have reflected a blending with Sūta culture. In other words there is no other ground besides the tendencies of the western scholars to draw inferences from words alone from the historical point of view, (without understand-

\*It is not that Europeans had no idea of this for Winternitz says that the Brāhmaṇa literature belongs to a specific class. The Atharva Veda is regarded as belonging to the lower class but they did not bear in mind the importance of this fact as they are unable to abandon the notion of chronological succession.

ding the heart of the Rgveda) in order to assert that the literature of the Rgvedic mantras, assuming its posteriotity to Soota literature belongs to a people of different culture. When a culture attains perfection, different forms of literature suitable to different strata of society flourishing under it, and along with them certain connective sorts of literature like the Brähmana works, bridging the hiatus, are also produced at one and the same time.\* In sheer ignorance of this fact Ketkar, though accepting that the creators of both the Mantra and Sūta literature were of equal status and of high culture, or that the Rgveda does not contain a description of a conflict between the Āryas and non-Āryans and that the immigrants at the time of the battle of the ten princes were like the indigenous people, again fell into the whirlpool of wrong conclusions. This is because he was wedded to the peculiar hypothesis that all transitions in society are occasioned by adultery, or promiscuity or the tendency to reconcile each other through flattery and compromising attitude in order to attain social and political ends, or similar other extraneous factors. He has no idea that the human being has an inner life, faith and feelings, that his intellect as well as his outlook on life is constantly growing and that these internal causes, independently and irrespective of extraneous factors, may and do cause such transitions. Anglicized brains like Dr. Ketkar who ridicule the late Nana Pavagi as a puritan Brähmana are incapable of rising to such a height. This is why, in spite of our agreement with him on basic principles there results a difference in our way of thinking.

There is yet another reason why, the outlook of the Vedic people and Ketkar's seemingly similar thesis present a world of difference. It is that he never felt it necessary to examine the fad of Dravidian culture, got up by European scholars. Modern scholars have classified extant human races on the basis of the study of man's bones, especially of the skull, his nose, his hair,

complexion and other features Assuming its truth, for the sake of argument, it has no direct connection with human culture. People belonging to the same ethnic class are also found in different conditions on account of an incidental difference in region, time and circumstances. People who were once regarded as belonging to the highest culture are today at the lowest rung of the cultural ladder. Even among those, supposedly belonging to one ethnic group, are found different levels of cultural advancement In such circumstances, it is not fair to assert, merely on the basis of a difference of race or on the basis of a discovery of a particular type of culture of that race at a certain spot, that persons belonging to that race in all times and climes were in one and the same cultural stage. Even Ketkar has shown very well that before the Rgveda, people belonging to the Dravidian or some other race, but styling themselves as Aryans flourished here. For over five or six millenia they are flourishing under the same culture up to this day What ground is there to say that they were not so in the Rgvedic age ?

Really speaking, even this discussion is superfluous, but it has assumed such importance, because several people are pressing it for propagating their own views, taking undue advantage of the confused condition of our thought People calling themselves Hindus in India have lost nerve and are in the present shelterless condition intensely yearning to throw away whatever traits are treated as a differentia of our culture by foreigners. All the same since they claim to have been for the good of the world they are constantly endeavouring to emit this fire on to some one else and to spread it as far as possible Such subjects come handy to such people. If these persons with little understanding are told that once upon a time there was no fundamental difference and the people of other cultures and we are born of a hybrid conglomeration, they naturally begin to feel that there is no sense in any such thing as culture and that

purity of race is also the figment of imagination. What remains, therefore, to be achieved is to behave as one wishes. Even these principles are put forth in such a fashion that their inherent contradictions escape the popular mind and the people who are racked by adverse circumstances have scarcely so much discernment and discretion left in them. Their utmost ambition is will-nilly to eke out an existence and they are most ready to follow the footsteps of anyone who is willing to take the lead. The question whether there was any such independent entity as the Aryan people, 8 millenia back or even, earlier or whether they were the result of different races fusing together is irrelevant to the solution of modern problems. The real questions in present circumstances are : What is the real import of what we call Vedic culture ? Is it possible to maintain it in the present circumstances ? Is it impossible on the other hand to reconcile it with the spirit of the present age ? And lastly, has it at all sufficient value to deserve to be maintained at all costs ? Once these basic questions are answered, all other minor queries will be answered in their wake. Cultural problems are to be tackled with reference to a study of basic cultural principles and not merely on the strength of cultural analogies. We blindly accept as gospel truth sciences like ethnology and their propositions because we understand nothing about them. But it is nothing but a framework of presumptuous inferences, which, too, as already shown, are so mutually interdependent and basically inconsistent, that an ordinary difference in the views of two scientists results in an interval of millions of years. Instead of resting content that we are on the right lines on the basis of such ' sciences ', it is infinitely better to take a leap in the dark.

Confining ourselves to the present problem, there is in India today a culture based on some specific principles. It dates back to a stage whence its differentia from other cultures can be traced back. Questions

such as "what were the conditions in this country prior to this culture?" may have their importance in world history but they are not so important from the point of view of our culture. The British, for instance, are a hybrid mass but their real history begins only from the stage where they appeared on the horizon as Britons, a separate human group. The antagonism between the French and the British could not be reconciled even with the reminiscence that the British have a French element in them. The same is true of the Danes and others who constituted the British people. On the other hand, even if it is shown that the Dravidians had an independent culture in ancient times, neither the Aryans nor the Dravidians who are put into a common cultural crucible, can now get out of it. They have to bring about a common prosperity through mutual cooperation under the aegis of the common Vedic culture which they share. In a sense it is commonly accepted that the entire human race was, at a certain stage, anthropoidic in character but no historian today begins the history of any nation from a story of monkeys, describing how they subsist on leaves and live on branches and how their female ones mutually protect their young ones from the attack of the senior male, in order that they may later gratify them, and how, after they are grown up copulate with them alone with great pleasure. But, if some one were to do so there is no knowing whether the modern educated generation of today yearning for promiscuous relations would not hesitate to quote it as authority!

This is how this subject is being exploited. Leaving aside the undue importance given to it, and looking upon the subject from a purely historical point of view, one has to admit that an independent Dravidian\*

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\* We have insufficient knowledge of what was true Aryan, and we know facts regarding Dravidian though only long after it had been affected, by the Aryan Invasion. Hence, as often confession of ignorance is preferable to the affectation of knowledge" pages 9-12, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda* by Dr Keith.

culture is one of the many bluffs concocted by European scholars. There may be a Dravidian race but there is no such entity as Dravidian culture. Within the body politic of a developed culture, there come to be several strata. The thoughts and actions, modes and actions of worship and devotion, method and manner of dressing and means of comfort belonging to this strata, though so strange to us are occasioned by the time, the clime, the attitudes and the outlooks of the people constituting these different strata.

But, under these externalia there is a living heart which, if examined gives evidence of the presence in the fabric of the fundamental principles of that culture. It is commonplace that the different fibres in the body make glands of different sizes according to their respective functions, and yet one and the same vital sap runs through them all. The case of culture is exactly similar; but in utter ignorance of this fact European scholars run away with the idea, that in that primitive or barbarous (!) stage, every human group marked by some sort of separation must be homogeneous and uniform from inside. Another idea of theirs is that whatever transitions took place in the formation of larger societies, through the combination of these groups, were all brought about only by blood fusion, adultery or social needs, political expediencies, or such other external factors. They have in fact no idea that these people had something like an inner life and that the growth of this inner life had an important part to play in this synthetic expansion. Hence they have no idea, that just as different varieties found in a country, like the waters of different rivers flowing through the same bed may be indicative of original separateness, so also they may connote only different branches like the many mouths of a great river. If a culture becomes absorbed in another it is never through mere force or oppression only but willingly or on account of similarity or even of superiority of one over the other. Even in ancient times there were persons with a high degree of inte-

llectual excellence, dogged attachment to principles, and steadfastness. And it was more difficult then, than it is now, to keep them incessantly under subjection through deceit, hypocrisy or oppression. European scholars do not understand these facts. While it is true that there being only a few intellectuals the bulk of society implicitly followed their lead, it is also true that these very intellectuals promised moral assets like theism, notions of sin and merit, fear of the other world, intense yearning for divine grace, the need for purity and chastity, devotion to truth and compassion, to such an acute and vital degree as can scarcely be imagined by the typical modern sceptic. On account of an ignorance of these facts all these research scholars are possessed by the devil of deceit and hypocrisy to such an extent that they do not hesitate to make statements (reflecting the impurity of their heart) that even great men like Sāyanāchārya deliberately perpetuate falsehoods in their works. Persons like Rājwāde whose writings smack of the boundless insolence of his pride in the knowledge of science, or Dr. Bannerjee Shastrī, come under the same category. He had once made the pernicious charge of falsehood against Sāyanāchārya\* in this very manner. In an earlier chapter this point has been elucidated with the illustration of a Poona tea affair.† The Rgveda itself refers to Kānva, the propounder of a popular branch of the Śukla Yajurveda, of being black in complexion (X, 31-21), and yet Rājwāde jumped to his conclusion at the very sight of this story of Yājñavalkya and Vaiśampāyana. What else could this story connote except a patent quarrel between the fair and the black-rooted in the inferiority of the black Yajurvedis born to black non-Aryan women from fair Yajurvedis, or, to fair women from the black like the modern American negroes ?

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\* "(His successors) from Yāsk to Sāyana set about to find out and record tradition and manufacture it in case of need." *Modern Review*, Jan 1926

† Vide supra Book III "The Science of Research" Page 72.

With the help of such science of research European scholars have built up some ideas about the culture of, what they call, Vedic Āryans. From a purely logical point of view they have no value beyond the figments of imagination. Even they themselves admit on certain occasions and yet they proceed with the help of such lame concepts, of which more than three-fourths are based on the doubtful foundation of non-mention, that whatever does not fit in with what is described as Vedic culture must belong to the Dravidian culture. No adequate definition of Dravidian culture beyond this can possibly be given. If the Muslims had lived here longer, every single Muslim trait would also have been hall-marked as, Dravidian ! Such is the real nature of what is styled as 'Dravidian Culture' today. The existence of this culture is generally decided by four or five criteria. Among these are specific types of skeletons, disinterred from the earth and their accompanying exhibits. If these skeletons belonged to the dead bodies buried in a systematic manner, that manner is likely to give some indications of the modes of thought and action of those people. Secondly, a study of the Dravidian languages is included among these criteria. Thirdly, whatever is determined from the Vedas as opposed to Āryan culture is all stamped as Dravidian. Fourthly, methods of animistic worship, like the worship of snakes, trees, etc. are also similarly dubbed as Dravidian. Fifthly and lastly, whatever traits, not found in the Rgvedic hymns and discerned in later literature and culture occurring as strange to any writer, are almost authoritatively inferred as possibly borrowed from the Dravidians. The bugbear of Dravidian culture has been created with the help of these five means cited above. It is, of course, not possible to pay detailed attention to this subject in this book, but it is necessary to give an indication thereof as briefly as possible.

It is apparent from the Rgveda that the custom of burial was as common among Vedic Āryans as that of cremation. Hymns of the 10th Mandala (e. g hymn 18) are utilized to prove the existence of remarriage in the Rgvedic age, but it is of course a mistake. Some people did bury the the dead. It is not impossible, that even in that age, as at present, there might have been different human races within the body politic of one and the same culture. Once we take into account that among several classes in Āryan culture burial of the dead has been customary, the skeletons, though they may serve to indicate specific ethnic groups, cannot sufficiently warrant separateness of culture. The same is the case with Dravidian languages. It is commonly supposed today that there is an independent language like the Dravidian language, but one thing should be noted here. There is a group of scholars which holds the view that even the Dravidian race—not to speak of Dravidian languages—is itself a branch of the greater Caucasian race. There is also another group of scholars, holding that even Dravidian languages have originated from Samskr and it has adduced adequate evidence to prove its case. In the basic elements of a language pronouns are very important. These scholars hold that the possessive, demonstrative and interrogative pronouns in the Dravidian languages have originated from Samskr. Moreover, the suffixes of genders and numbers attached to these pronouns are also Āryan in origin. The suffixes of tenses, moods and voice are no less Āryan. Several words and their deflections which are found in the Vedas and the Avestha but not found in later Samskr, are however found in the Tamil language. Similarly, in view of grammar, phonetics, syntax and such other peculiarities claimed to be Dravidian suggest a possibility that they too have come down from Samskr into the Dravidian languages. In this case there is nothing more decisive beyond an ambiguous similitude. The separateness of the

Dravidian languages is of course, there, but by itself, it does not determine an independent origin. Take, for instance, several non-Samskr̥t words - Arabic, Persian, English etc., which have come into the Marathi language. Take also the Anglicized turns of modern Marathi sentences and the patently Westernized idioms abundant in use today. Could they justify a conclusion, that the Marathi language is not derived from Samskr̥t? It has further to be borne in mind that every language does develop some peculiarities of its own, both prior to and after the process of being built up. The Marāthi has one peculiar advance over Samskr̥t, namely, that in it the verb varies as the gender of the subject or the object. In fine, the hypothesis of Dravidian culture is unproved in its very basis and assuming for the sake of argument that it has been proved, it does not lead us very far in drawing general conclusions about the history of the Rgvedic period. We have to get a thorough acquaintance with Rgvedic Culture alone. There is no strong evidence at the present stage to prove that in an age reflected in the Rgveda there was any other powerful culture which must be regarded as distinct from Vedic culture and is capable of having a reaction on Vedic culture. If we remember Ketkar's conclusion that the religion of the common people in the Rgvedic age was very much the same as it is today, it also follows, as a matter of course, that the religion, though seemingly different, was foundationally Vedic as it is today. In a work of the character of compilation like the Rgveda one cannot insist that every phase of life and thought must be reflected, nor can one further conclude, that what does not happen to be mentioned in it was not at all in existence in that age. Beyond the postulate that there could not be any traditions of those things which are not mentioned in the Rgveda, there is nothing to deny that the traditions of several things have come down from the Rgveda to the present day.

Dr. Ketkar has himself disproved several of the wild guesses made about the Rgveda. He has very well proved how words like 'dāsa', 'dasyu' and 'asura' though occasionally denoting human groups actually connote qualities or defects. This ought to prove the futility of the undue importance given to exhumed corpses. Even to this day the Lingayats bury their dead but from their exhumed corpses if some were to conclude at a later date that they belonged to a non-Vedic culture it would be entirely mistaken. The same is the case with this also. Even Dr. Ketkar has differentiated between the Sūta and Mantric culture and after making all these strides has again thrown the reader into the labyrinth of three cultures, namely, the original Dravidian culture, the sūta culture of the earlier immigrant Aryans and the Mantric Culture of Post-Sudāsa Aryans for the simple reason that he did not start his research with definite ideas of religion and culture.

I have amply elucidated what is meant by culture. As for religion I have made the subject very clear in my earlier Marathi work "The Reorganisation of Vedic Culture". External conduct may indicate religion but does not reflect wholly man's religion. It has a more vital connection with man's inner life which lends significance to his external conduct. In view of this the words 'Dharma' (religion) and 'Samskrti' (culture) though seemingly synonyms are yet wide apart. Religion like culture arises out of man's philosophical ideal and cosmology, but unlike culture, it does not entirely rest on external circumstances. Culture has mostly to do with thought about external circumstances. Religion pays only a general consideration to it. In the definition of religion, philosophy and general circumstances are only generally considered and the individual, an element in the external circumstances, is chiefly considered in relation to the series of efforts which he has to make in order to attain his philosophical ideals. Hence, in spite of philosophy and external circumstances being

the same, or even the culture being one and the same, it is quite possible that people may have 'different religions'. Speaking generally, and not with the carping accuracy of the Mīmāṃsakas, the Jains, the Buddhists, the Lingāyats, the Mahānubhāvas, the Sikhs and the Sanātānists belong to a common culture, though their religions are different. The reason is that the ideal commonly accepted by all is sought to be approached by them by extremely different paths. Generally speaking the end of all religions in the world is the same and yet I do not include other religions under this culture, while I include Jains, Buddhists and others, who do not recognize the authority of the Vedas, because cosmology which is an inseparable accidence of religion is common to Vedic Aryans and to Jains and Buddhists (who do not accept the authority of Vedas) while it is different in the case of Islamic and other people.

Thus there are two principles in religion which give rise to external conduct. The one is philosophical ideals and the other is the science of effort to attain them. These are the two criteria which decide whether a particular mode of external conduct comes within the sphere of a particular religion. The science of effort like the science of medicine, has to make its attempt in various forms without giving up the basic principle, in view of the individual patience, health and capacity. This is why, one and the same disease needs several medicines. Whatever changes the physician makes in the accompaniments to the medicine and the taboos and restrictions, and whatever the mixtures he prescribes he is following the Ayurveda so long as he abides by the principles that the body is made up of *doshas*, *dhatus*, and *malas*. One should remember this fact while studying human religion or culture. It can safely be asserted that the so-called Dravidian people entirely

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\* It may be said that our culture is the same as that of the Jains and the Arya Samāj but our religions are different. The culture of the Jews and Christians is the same but their religions are different.

belonged to the Vedic culture because they have no separate philosophy and cosmology nor is there iota of evidence to believe that they had these at any other time. The devotion to God Dattātreya has come to be known in the recent few centuries. No one would ever doubt that it was borrowed from any non-Aryan or non-Vedic people. There is no direct trace of Dattātreya in the Vedic hymns. The same is the case with Vyākatesh. Lately there has been a fashion to say that the deity Herumān i Dravidian. But such is not the case with the above two deities. The deity Pānduranga of Pendhari also belongs to this class. Instances could easily be multiplied. Merely because these worships or devotions are not found in the Rgveda it does not mean that they are borrowed from foreign or non-Vedic people. Why should we not carry the same logic still farther back and apply it to newly-introduced deities like Śiva, Viṣṇu and Gaṇeśa? It cannot be said that there is any evidence besides the aforesaid preposterous science of research to say that the forms of worship termed Dravidian, by European scholars, have not come down from the Vedic people just as the above deities have come down to us in a specific manner and for specific purpose.

Just as such new deities and forms of worship come into vogue it is also true that old deities like Skanda, Prajāpati, Ahirāha and others either recede into the penumbra of mythology or fall into oblivion. Poor (!) Brahmadeva has now no other shrine except Purkara. Barrein the mention of Skanda in the processes of the tantric cult the worship of Kartikāswamy barely holds its own in the south. Kartikā worship not found in the Rgveda is still prevalent but even the name of Gārabha is not heard out of the Gārabha Upnayad. This cycle of apperances and disappearances of deities and their worship in the culture has not come into existence, it is said, but by those researchers simple for the bulk of the people to accept a compromise, or to say that it is the community. It is true that such a thesis is not

when two cultures come into mutual contact but this wave, scarcely, if ever, reaches the innermost centre of the cultural citadel. At the most it beats against its outer foundations. The central portion of the citadel has remained entire and undamaged upto this day or else Vedic culture, in spite of an intimate contact with that of Jains, Buddhists, Muslims etc. would have failed to remain unswerved from its basic principles. Followers of the Vedic culture uttered the name of Rāma and Rahim as a means of compromise but in so doing they retained their Rāma intact. All they said was Rahim is subsumed in our Rāma. They did not identify Rāma with Rahim. The same is the case with every deductive culture perfectly consistent with its philosophy and cosmology. It may seem famished or fattened on certain occasions but it always keeps its central citadel intact. This is why in the history of India when two religions have flourished together for some time a third sub-religion or sect arises. When Buddhism and Hinduism flourished side by side sects like Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna had their rise. From a combination of Jainism and the Vedic religion arose the Mahānubhāva and the Lingāyat sects. Sikhism arose from a synthesis of Islām and Hinduism. The Ārya Samaj and Brāhma Samaj are buffer states, as it were, between the Vedic and the Christian religions. If the Vedic religion or culture had been as flexible as the researcher imagines, no such development should have taken place. In fine, it may be said that the rise and disappearance of different forms of worship are manifestations of the two properties of Vedic culture cited by Lokamanya Tilak, namely, that it has many and various means and that there is no certainty about the deities it worships.

In the course of a comparative study any trait, before it is pronounced to be foreign to a culture, must be shown as not consistent with its basic principles. For instance, if the five vital airs (*pañcha prāṇa*) or the Lokalok mountain happened to be mentioned in Jewish

works, the references are definitely foreign to them for they are not found anywhere in their physiology or cosmology. But if there is a mention of immaculate conception it need not be called foreign as it is in keeping with their science of Theology and there is no objection why it should not independently strike one as a human function. In other words, we have to examine whether the forms of worship said to be borrowed from the Dravidians and having no basis beyond a non-mention in the Rgveda are in keeping with the basic genius of Vedic culture and whether this basic genius has been intact from the Rgvedic age to this day.

It is not that non-mention is altogether without value. It does corroborate the conclusions arrived at from other premises. But its evidence has some limitations. Non-mention may be due to the fact that a thing may be very commonly known just as it may be due to the nature of the work and the nature of the topic dealt with. Even the devotees of Dravidian culture like Sesha Iyengar\* have to admit that no exhibits relating to the pre-historic Dravidian culture are found.

It may perhaps be said that the Vedas yield some information about the political existence of the Dravidians but so far as their religion is concerned no direct account is available except the obstinately farfetched word 'Śiśnadeva'. There is, therefore, no means to examine whether the forms of worship alleged to be borrowed from them by us are at all in keeping with their original genius. It is not possible to think of Suta civilization supposed by Dr. Ketkar to have existed before the battle of the ten princes as it has no existence outside his imagination. The only alternative left, therefore, is to see whether these forms of

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\* Regarding the prehistoric period, it has already been shown how from the Vedic literature we could learn something Beyond these references, our knowledge, as regards the political organisation of the Dravidian Society, in the prehistoric period, is sadly defective. —Dravidian India P. 172.)

worship are consistent with the genius of Vedic culture as revealed from the Rgveda. After briefly considering this question from this point of view, I shall come to the chief topic of this chapter, namely, the point of view of the Vedic people about the origin and maintenance of Vedic culture.

We have before us some reliable history of Vedic religion at least for 2,500 years. From this we can see that allowing for some hypothesis regarding important transitions in its external nature there are several principles in it which have remained unaltered from the beginning to the present day. These principles are, of course, as 2,500 years old and subsequent changes have taken place in consistency with these principles. If it can be shown that the very same principles were in observance in our religion in the Rgvedic age it may be asserted without any fear of contradiction that several things not mentioned in a work of the character of compilation like Rgveda but found in later works can be in keeping with the same principles. It is necessary to produce sufficient positive evidence to deny their presence in early times. Hence if after a brief survey of these principles it could be shown that there was image worship (*saguna upāsanā*) in the Rgvedic age the worship of deities like Śiva and Viṣṇu would naturally be proved to be consonant with Vedic spirit. I have made elsewhere a slight attempt of this kind (viz. to show what these basic principles are) and would simply cite those principles as follows:—

1. That this manifested world was born out of an unmanifested principle.
2. That this manifested world abides by certain canons, and recedes into the unmanifested stage by virtue of and in order of the same canons.
3. Man is an entity in a particular stage of this process of manifestation, and he cannot have a knowledge in its entirety of all the manifested world *in his present stage*.

4 It is nevertheless possible for man to have such knowledge by undergoing a certain discipline preparatory to it. In other words even in this manifested world there are two spheres, from the human point of view, of man as at present constituted, viz. manifest and unmanifest or palpable and impalpable. Man remains imperfect unless and until he can bridge this gulf by acquiring, through discipline, a certain capacity.

5. These two spheres in the manifested world, namely, those, which are and are not susceptible to human sense organs are not mutually exclusive and uncorrelated. They are, on the other hand, connected and intimately bound up with each other and there is some sort of intercourse between them (as pointed out in the Gita.)

6. In the sphere, insusceptible to human sense organs, there are different planes of existence ranged according to the different degrees of density of the basic substances. If the human being brings about self-evolution according to the science of Yoga, he can maintain perfect contact with beings on these different planes

7. Although the duration of the human body is very brief, the life of the indwelling soul is eternal and hence its memory is also infinite. With the aid of that memory, it is possible for man to know the history of the entire cosmos.

8. There is a perfect agreement between Vedic Philosophy and the general conclusions drawn from the history that has gone by and repeated several times.

In addition to these principles one or two traits may be remembered. Although the power of speech (*vāk*) seems to originate in the human body it is divine in origin and has creative power but as it is manifested through the instrumentality of the body, its power and efficiency depend upon the mechanism of the body. Its manifestation, therefore, varies according to the capacity of this mechanism. This is an important trait. Secondly, man can have his purpose fulfilled, if he adopts any means, not contrary to the abovementioned

basic principles. In other words, the means based on these principles, howsoever seemingly different, ultimately belong to one and the same plan.

It would be sufficient even to bear these things generally in mind. This will also show how appropriately the late Lokamanya Tilak characterized the Hindu dharma as marked by reverence for the Vedas, the variety of paths and a multiplicity of deities to be worshipped. It is obvious, that he must have arrived at this characterisation after a thorough study of these points. Nowadays, even many Occidental savants have begun to feel, that a culture worth the name must be in keeping with these principles to some extent or the other. They think that a culture which fulfils this requirement can alone bring some good to humanity and be permanent in character. Gerald Heard, in his book "Source of Civilisation" has sought to establish this very truth. He opines that of all cultures known hitherto Vedic culture alone really deserves the name. It alone is capable of bringing about the welfare of mankind, and of holding its own in the face of all adversities. He adds that this Vedic culture is based on the solid foundation of the science of Yoga discovered by the Vedic people alone and thoroughly known only to themselves. This science of Yoga is not a mere intellectual discipline but a practical science like several other physical sciences of the modern type, and none would be deemed a real scientist who hazards to judge it, without having himself experimented according to its methods up to the stage of *sanyama* prescribed by the sage Patañjali. We have nothing, whatsoever, to do with such pseudoscientist whether he is a Great German scholar like Weber or an Indian Tarkatirtha.

It will easily be understood even from the foregoing discussion that all these principles are embodied in the faith and sentiments of those who recite Rgvedic hymns. It is but proper on this occasion to put the reader in mind of two cannons already

cited. In the first place in a work of a compilatory character like the Rgveda, it little matters how often a thing is mentioned. Even a single clear reference is of moment from the historical point of view. In the second place, in assessing the maturity of a culture of the people of any period, from a number of references relating to cultural advance, the one suggesting the highest measure of advance should be specifically attended to. Besides the allusions in the "Asya vāmasya" hymn and the Hymn of Creation, the Rgveda abounds in a number of utterances purporting to mean that all this universe has originated from one principle and is essentially one. Most of the hymns also voice a realisation that man in his present stage knows little and has a long way to go in order to attain perfection. Yet another thing patent from the hymns is that since the power and knowledge of Gods is immense as compared to that of man and since their knowledge is blissful and also since Gods are not perceptible to man at his will this cosmos is naturally divided into spheres, namely, that which is and which is not susceptible to sense organs. An ardent prayer is voiced in several hymns to the effect that we (human beings) should attain godhood and that this gulf may be bridged. These two concepts are generally present in other religions as well, but it is a differentia of the Vedic people, that these two worlds are mutually dependent for their maintenance, and growth. This concept is extremely ancient and is elucidated in the sentiment that even gods have to depend upon human beings for getting the drink of Soma juice. Prayer hymns or ritual charms are systematic treatises and references to such topics are bound to be few and far between. The concept of *yajña* (sacrifice) common to the Vedic people has subsequently been elaborated by Lord Krsna in the Gīta when he said that all beings have their origin in food (*anna*), that food (*anna*) owes its origin to the rains and that the rains occur because of *Yajña*.

( sacrifice ). In this verse the casual relation between sacrifice and rains has patently been brought out. It is significant that it is not glibly said that sacrifices propitiate deities whose favour brings in rains. This clearly means that the affairs of these two worlds are correlated as cause and effect which is not easily understandable by the intellect of the average man. References to the existence of several categories are found in the Vedas as gandharvas, upsarās, sādhyās, pitaras, devas, etc. Evidently they can not refer to human beings. There are accounts of sages and human beings having attained the power to carry on communications with these different categories. Every other hymn echoes the idea that such power can be, and has been, attained on the strength of meditation, and prayers are abundant that Gods should endow human beings with such power of meditation. There are a number of references to this power of concentration, by whose exercise wonderful miracles may be performed and knowledge of past events directly attained. Rgvedic cosmology and philosophy do not at all differ from the basic philosophy of Vedic culture, writ large on the Upanisadas and the cosmology detailed in the Sūta literature. There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that the worship of snakes, trees, and other objects and deities like Śiva in the Sūta literature are in any way inconsistent with this grand tradition.

There is Only one in the universe and nothing but One. That One becomes, all the apparent, from Brahma down to a blade of grass. The Upanisads reveal that in order to realize this truth, different paths have been resorted to, to suit the capacity of human beings of different grades of development. Vedic aspirants (sādhakas) adopted different remedies to do away with the feeling that the world is manifold and separate from us. Various lores in the Upanisads bear testimony to this. It has already been said that man resorts to the path of knowledge or of devotion or of action or of Yoga (synthesis of the individual with the cosmic



European scholars have constructed the edifice of the so-called Dravidian culture.

Different paths of worship from that of snakes and trees to that of 'Kālī' in the cremation grounds, dancing a frightening ecstatic dance in the naked form, have all been devised to suit aspirants of different grades and capacities. It is the principle of the science of Yoga that through such devices infirmities like shame, fear, grief, infatuation, contempt, secretiveness and psychic traits like egotism have to be conquered. Gautama Buddha used to practise a *sadhanā* named Bhayabhairavi to banish the sense of fear. There is no reason to suppose, beyond the oft abused argument of non-mention that these traditions of the mythological literature are of recent origin. This confusion has resulted, because the mythological literature was separated from the dynasties mentioned in it, (taking the dynasties alone as Sūta literature) and it was asserted on the strength of imagination alone that this Sūta literature was inserted into mythological literature at a subsequent date. I admit, that the mythological literature has variously been augmented, but it is difficult to know, when Ketkar has used as evidence, even the superfluous and extraneous growth of the Bhavisya Purāna besides the actual dynasties—why he has rejected as unauthentic the cosmology of the Purānas and the other plentiful information based on it. There is no other reason for this arbitrariness except the selfsameness of European scholars characterized by Goldstucker as "I feel so" or "I think so", or "I am inclined to take it" and the like. Dr. Ketkar himself has shown that although the extant edition of the Purānas are very recent, the Puranic traditions are very ancient. He has also shown how the distinction between the *Itihāsa* (history) on the one hand and the *Purāna* (mythology) on the other, dates from the time of the horse sacrifices. Now, though there is a chapter on horse sacrifice in the Yajurveda, its tradition is prior to the Vedic hymns. The Rgveda contains descriptions of the horse

to be sacrificed and the reference to Sudāsa having performed a horse sacrifice. It has also independent hymns containing prayers of the horse to be sacrificed (I, 163-166). In the face of these major references to the horse sacrifice and to the seven or eight sacrificial priests e.g. Adhvaryu, Dr. Ketkar's remarks, that the religion of the Rgvedic people does not seem to have developed beyond offering Soma as naivedya to the Gods within the four walls of a house, are surprising indeed. Or in one sense there is no cause for surprise also as these remarks are merely in keeping with the European scholars' tradition If they are bent on establishing a proposition, even a single hymn, a reference or a word suffices for them On the strength of such slender support they make bold to pull their own weight to heights of lofty conclusions such as the determination of the age of the Rgveda But, if there is an unpalatable fact they begin to disown the burden saying that these few references are not adequate and would not sustain such conclusions \* Dr. Ketkar, admittedly their pupil, would naturally not be content even with two major hymns in the Rgveda, not to speak of several other minor references to the horse sacrifice and the horse to be sacrificed

One has to admit, since there are two independent hymns devoted to the praise of the horse to be sacrificed and to the names of the important sacrificial priests in the body of the Rgveda itself, that the institution of horse sacrifice must have been in existence prior to the Rgveda These hymns are indeed very charming and reflect several notions of those people Christians and others have on a large scale believed, and Indians have also cherished the belief to some extent, that celestial souls and angels have wings We can trace the origin of this concept in this hymn which also reveals one or two other things Vedic culture covered a much larger sphere

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\* He has thus fittingly derived the Indian Dassera from the Jewish Ashara (*Maharashtrya Encyclopaedia Vol. III*)

than the text of the Rgveda actually suggests. For instance, in connection with the horse sacrifice there must have pre-existed a vast body of literature describing the procedure of minor ritual detail, whether that literature was the same as the present Yajurveda or some other body of works now extinct. Even from several other references in the Rgveda one can surmise, that there must have been other literature elucidating those ideals. The extent of the growth of this literature is obvious from the allusions to several lores in the Chhandogya Upaniṣad and especially to the reference in the Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣada. Even in this the Itihāsa and Purāna are separately mentioned and there is a reference not only to the aphoristic literature on different subjects but also to commentaries thereon. Though all this literature is extinct by now one may state, without any fear of contradiction, that all extant literature is in a large measure an epitome of the same. It has already been pointed out, from the examples of Vatsyāyana, Kautilya and the Mānava Smṛti abridged by Bhrgu, how for thousands of years attempts have been made to preserve this literature, at least in a summarized form. Hence, leaving alone certain casual details, it is but reasonable to say that all these traditions, at any rate so far as the basic principles of all aspects of culture are concerned, have come down intact from the Vedic period to the present day.

On the occasion of a horse sacrifice there were, in the items of programme scheduled for different days, some days allotted to the citation of the Itihāsas and Purānas. This makes it obvious that their tradition dates prior to the Rgveda and that from this date both these subjects were treated as independent. We are not able to distinguish between them, as both these are mixed up in the extant Purānas. Nor are we in a position to understand the point why the extant Mahābhārata, though in the position of a parent

to all the Purānas, has yet traditionally been called Itihāsa. The Bhārata was originally Itihāsa alone but it acquired its present character of the *Mahābhāatra*, as at the time of its different recensions it was augmented with much stuff akin to the Purānas. Even this augmentation was natural, not arbitrary, and contains solid stuff and not mere cock-and-bull stories, as the modern researcher imagines. It contains a picture of the culture at the time of Bhārata. In the Purānas available today dynasties (*rāmśānu-charita*) are regarded by the Western scholars as a separate portion. It is dubbed as Sūta literature and arbitrarily exploited, to the exclusion of the other portion, but this is no research.

It is however, possible for us to sift what is Itihāsa and what is Purana from the admixture of the two in the extant purānas, for the simple reason that if there is any information unsullied which has come down in it, it must of necessity belong to the Purānas. Their nature reveals that it must be an old piece of literature which proves how, even in the Rgvedic age, the need for such literature was indispensable. The reader would discern, even from the casual descriptions occurring hitherto, how highly accomplished Rgvedic culture was. Its externalia, as well as its cosmic conceptions (that is the ādhidaivika portion) are found amply reflected in the Rgveda and the Brāhmaṇa Works. Even its philosophical portion can be inferred, partially from the Rgveda and exhaustively from Upanisadic literature. But the reader will easily remember from the definition of culture cited at the beginning of this work, how, besides the above two, a third element, namely, cosmology\*

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\* I have specifically used this word as other words do not connote the shade of the meaning. Words like viśva (universe) and sarga (creation) fall short of the meaning. Our word 'Purānaśāstra' not only connotes the origin, maintenance and destruction of the universe but also the system of its operation ('Pur' means 'cosmos' and the root 'an' means 'to breathe'. Purāna is cosmic mythology) but it also includes dynasties. Hence I have adopted this word.

is needed to complete the concept of culture. None of the abovementioned works however gives a consistent account of this cosmology but it is obvious, from the fact that there was a separate body of literature devoted to bhakti (devotion) jñana (knowledge) and karma (action), that there must have been an independent body of literature elucidating cosmological concepts. This literature must be the same as the Purāna Veda which was scheduled to be cited on the eighth day of a horse sacrifice. The derivation of Purāna, that it is new though old, is at best a cheap pun on words. As I have pointed out in my series of articles entitled 'Our Purānas' (cosmic mythology), the word 'Purāna' is made up of two elements, namely, 'pur' which means the cosmos and 'an' which means to breathe or to move about. Purāna is the science giving a detailed account of the origin, maintenance and destruction of the cosmos. Dr. Winternitz has very appropriately translated Purāna as "cosmic mythology". The science of this cosmos embodied in the Purānas is generally elucidated in the history of mankind, which made the inclusion of dynasties as a characteristic of the Purānas. Moreover, in order to serve the purpose of the common people the Purānas of today were given a definite form by augmenting several stories and various topics in order to create human interest. What I call cosmology thus contains an account of the creation of sarga (सर्ग), pratisarge (प्रतिसर्ग) and the succession of ages (manvantara). In other words, the modern researcher's study of Rgvedic culture is rendered largely imperfect by his eschewing cosmology and confining himself to dry dynasties. His research, therefore, has no scientific character, and he happens to imagine that whatever wild guesses which may possibly arise in his mind are all research.

The reason why I have dwelt too on this topic, is that the occidental research scholars happen to ignore even the more ordinary aspects of life, because they start with a deep-rooted presupposition about Rgvedic

culture. Speaking a little humorously, it may be said that they have exaggerated the value of non-mention to such an extent, and lent themselves to the haunting influence of the ghost of Dravidian Culture to such a ridiculous extent, that if there is no mention of cleansing the mouth or washing the body in the Rgveda, they would not hesitate to conclude the absence of these things among the Rgvedic people, and further, assert that the Rgvedic people must have borrowed these things from the Dravidians. The same is true about animistic worship and devotion to austere types of deities. Really speaking, on a conservative estimate, the history of India for the last 2,500 years is available to us. During this long period Indians came into contact with a number of other people. Some of them settled down here and enjoyed kingdoms for a long time, but how many deities or forms of worship did the Hindus borrow from them during this period ? In my view there is not a single instance which is culturally important. Instances to the contrary may, however, be multiplied. The same is true of the histories of people outside India. Exchange of deities or forms of worship is not so easy a thing as the researcher imagines, nor does it take place on account of sheerly utilitarian or commercial purposes, assimilating a different people or eliminating opposition. If the researcher thinks so, it is because he miserably lacks the imagination required to identify himself with others, and to understand their sentiments. The concept of deities prevalent among human beings of all stages—from primitive barbarous people right up to the Rsis ( sages ) who composed the Rgvedic hymns is infinitely more vital and deep-rooted than these superficial researchers happen to imagine. Hence a sudden metamorphosis or even a somersault does not take place arbitrarily or through external factors as, for instance, Napoleon getting ready to don an Islamic turban for suzerainty over Asia ! There is presumably a deeper method in it. Generally two cannons may be cited in

this connection. Such an exchange of cultural traits is more easily possible among those peoples whose cosmological concepts are similar. There has, in fact, been such a give and take between us and the Jains and the Buddhists which has lent some weight to this concept of give and take. But, one must remember that despite important differences in principles our cosmology has so much in common with that of the Jains and Buddhists that they are almost identical. There is no example, during these two millenia and a half, of forms of worship which we have borrowed or raised to importance from people whose cosmological concepts differ from ours. The second canon in this connection is, that so long as the culture of a community is ardently alive it does not tolerate such a borrowing of traits, whatever be their value. Such a thing happens only in a moribund or declining society. The Romans ruled for centuries over people of inferior cultures, but there is no instance of the Romans borrowing or adopting their deities. The same is the case with the Greeks. Several Muslims in India adopted the *Bhāgavata Dharma* and took to Vāsudeva worship but they continued to remain in India. In other words they were totally converted. The forms of worship among the American Red Indians could not penetrate into Spain. Similar instances could be multiplied. Not many instances could be found even among subject peoples—not to speak of imperial rulers—comparatively belonging to an inferior culture borrowing deities or forms of worship from the Rulers. When, therefore, such an exchange takes place, either the two cultures have a cosmology in common or else one of the two communities has lost its vitality and is almost in a moribund stage. In most cases it will be found that it perishes soon after. There is no such possibility in the case of Vedic culture and the so-called 'Dravidian Culture'. If at all, the boot is on the other leg.

Since there is a separate group of languages known as the Dravidian stock and since it has a

striking similarity with several languages spoken outside India, it is certain that there has existed, from ancient times, a stock of people speaking those languages. It is reasonable to say, in view of the corroborative (though questionable) ethnological evidence, that at some stage or the other such a people, distinct from the Vedic Aryans, must have inhabited India. I have no dispute on this point. My only objection is that there is no evidence, at any rate, at the present time, to suppose that these people were culturally more advanced. The entire cultural picture from very ancient times to the present day as seen from the Rgveda—referring even to the Pre-Rgvedic period—is uniformly of one mould. The emblems supposed to characterize Dravidian culture, belonged to that same culture, and have been occasioned by the existence of various strata within it. This seeming existence of the Dravidian languages is due to several Aryans forgetting their own language through an intimate contact with indigenous peoples. Similarly the reason why people of the different ethnic stock seem to be within the sphere of Vedic culture is the fact, that the Aryans trained them in their own culture and assimilated them. It is my personal view that the Vedic Dharma must have some provision for assimilating foreign peoples through some process. What this process should be, I have detailed in my earlier Marathi work, "The Reorganisation of Vedic Culture." In other words the Vedic people are of the view that there has been no augmentation of any important trait to Vedic culture from outside to this day and that there has been no change inconsistent with its basic science. It may be that these originally uncultured people perished even before they could come within the orbit of Vedic culture and that their language happened to remain among some Vedic people. The view that even the Dravidian language has originated from Samskr̥t is likely to be true. It is generally supposed that they (the Dravidians) belonged to a

different culture chiefly because several people within the Vedic community itself have for various reasons lost their culture and because these languages are found among such people alone. There is reason to infer that the wild tribe known as the Korkūs, in Melghāt in Berar, have originally descended from the Yādava race. Among the eighteen branches of the Yādava race one well known race was the Kukkura. When the city of Dwārkā perished in the sea, after the dispersion of Yādava, all their branches were scattered helter skelter. Out of these one rushed to the south and colonized in the valleys of the Narbadā and Tāpi. This small strip of land near the La at region and to the North of Aparānta was known as Kukkura, where this branch seems to have happily flourished for a long time. Its name is mentioned along with Aparānta in the inscriptions of Rudradāman. After their independent kingdom had vanished they slowly moved north and colonized near the source of Tāpti. The Korkus of Melghāt regard themselves as superior to other people, for instance, the Nahals of the same village. There is room to suppose, even on the basis of their customs and manners, their songs sung on different occasions and other traits, that they came from the direction of Saurāstra (that is modern Kāthuawār). If the Korku language, which has not been studied seriously by anybody so far, were to be pressed into the service of anthropology this hypothesis is very likely to gain ground. Even small hamlets in Melghāt - not to speak of larger villages like Dhārani, Vairat and Mānbhangā have Samskrītized names. This strengthens the inference that the modern Korkus are the erstwhile Kukkuras. Before the transposition of the consonants in the original name Kukkura it must have passed through intermediate stage of which a form is discerned in the Kukkuru ghat and the Kukkurdara near Chikhaldara in Berar. Those who originally belonged to the Yādav dynasty of Kṣatriyas have today degenerated to

such an extent that they appear like a different race speaking a different language.\* It is not unlikely that the same may have been the case with languages and races now supposed to be Dravidian. The late Rājwāde's view for instance, identifying erstwhile Kikattas with the modern Kaikadis is wellknown

In brief then, I hold that the culture reflected in the Rgveda is not essentially and principally different from the culture found today in India. And that whatever traits are found today are perfectly in keeping with its original genius and have also evolved out of it. The only point to note as is that since it was as perfectly evolved and as extensive in the Rgvedic age as it is today, it had within its body politic several strata representing varying capacities. These varying strata have been termed Dravidian, Turaniah and the like, by modern researchers who have raised this bogey of an independent Dravidian culture. It has no other basis besides deep-rooted prejudices, the causes for which have already been explained Dr. Ketkar has been caught in the meshes of illogical arguments. On the one hand, he states that the technique of the Vedic religion during the Mantric period was not far different from what it is today and that in the Rgveda itself several elements of the sacrificial institution are found. And yet, he retracts from this position by saying that during the Rgvedic age, the institution of sacrifice had not developed, and that the daily routine ritual of the Rgvedic people did not go beyond making offerings of Soma at different hours of the day (Maharashtriya Encyclopaedia Vol. II, page 358) Again on the one hand, he admits that there is plenty of evidence to show, that hereditary Brāhmanhood had come to be established as early as in the Mantric period (Ibid, Vol. III, page 478). But on the other hand, he asserts that pre-Vedic culture is non-Brahmanical, for which he has to create a bluff that in India there are several

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\* The language of the Korkus has changed to such an extent it that appears to belong to the Munda or Dravidian group.

non-Brahmanical Āryan languages. Thirdly, on the one hand, he confesses, that the religion of the common people in the Rgvedic age was the same as it is today and that it does not seem to have undergone much change which is tantamount to accepting that the religion of the common people as well as the Vedic religion were, then as now, very similar and that hereditary Brahmanhood had come to be established then as now. And yet he treats the two cultures (?) as belonging to different periods. While he accepts the existence of four classes and the hereditary character of the Brāhmaṇa class which is the soul of the system he denies, he denies that there was the Four Varna system during the Rgvedic age. The chief explanation of all these anomalies is that he is tacitly in the leading strings of European researchers. It never occurred to him that if anything needed research it was this so-called science of research itself, that the character of the culture reflected in the R̥gveda seems to have been founded on firm fundamental principles and that any research into this firmly-principled culture ought to be conducted only on the basis of its fundamental principles. In order to point out the non-Brahmanical portion of Āryan culture, the greatest reference he has found is that of Goviya in Ceylon (*Ibid Vol. III, page 117*) ! But the patent mistake in this argument is that he is not correct when he says that, "The Buddhists aimed at establishing the superiority of their (i. e. the Kshatriyas) culture over that of the Brahmins and not at annihilating the Brāhmaṇa community altogether". It may be so inferred from a casual reference in Gautama Buddha's speech that it was Buddha who personally aimed at it. But so far as the Buddhist religion is concerned it need not even be proved that it aimed only at the breakdown of the Varna system. There is no reason why Goviya's attempt to prove that he had Brāhmaṇa blood in his veins was "patently of a later date". On the other hand it is perfectly in keeping with

human nature. A similar tendency will be found to be common, even today, among the Hindus converted to Islam or Christianity. We have already seen how the hypothesis, that the entire Vedas do not reflect even the conditions at the time of the battle of the ten princes, not to speak of a prior age, is proved to be false. Similar is the fate of the claim that worship of snakes etc., was Dravidian and deities like Sankara, Gajanana, Kali etc., were non-Vedic in character, even if we assume that the Vedic hymns were composed after the battle of ten princes.

It has already been pointed out that such various deities were invented by Vedic culture to suit the practice of people of varying capacities. One peculiar trait of these deities should be borne in mind. All their names together with the names of the various elements in the forms of worship are not only in Samskrt, but even among people supposed to be Dravidians and actually speaking the so-called Dravidian languages, these deities are worshipped by Samskrt names alone. Among the mantras (charms) of the deities there are two types, namely, the self-evolved or independent on the one hand, and the benedictional on the other. The latter need not have specific roots (*bijas*) and may be in any language, while the former has roots and must be in Samskrt alone. All this discussion about *Mantraśāstra* has already appeared in my earlier work in Marathi, 'The Reorganisation of Vedic culture' (pages 45 to 70). The reader should bear it in mind in this connection. The original Mantras of Śiva and other deities as well as the roots of these mantras are in pure Samskrt and the auxiliary deities of these roots e. g. Indra, Agni, Rudra, Varuna, Aditi are all purely Vedic in character. None of these things is possible in the case of extraneous deities borrowed from outside. There are several among the Hindus today who can work Islamic charms of devenomising snake bites and scorpion bites, and driving away evil spirits or curing diseases, but the original

words in the Islamic languages, in the formulae of those charms, are kept intact. The peculiar order of utterance of different letters is the soul of a charm and the impress of its words can never undergo slightest alteration even after the lapse of millions of years.\* If these deities had been borrowed from foreigners their original mantras, despite any amount of external changes might necessarily have contained some of the foreign words. It has, therefore, to be admitted for all the above-mentioned reasons that all these forms of worship are purely Vedic in origin. If at all there has been any corruption in some forms, it is more likely to be due to their adoption by other people. For example, take the worship of the "Sankde Peer" and 'Chilā' among the Muslims. The first is borrowed from Ganpati adorned with a trunk and the second from worship to 'Munjā' (an inferior deity). Both these forms of worship are originally Hindu and no historical researcher would venture to trace them to an Islamic origin. Nor is anybody likely to suggest that the Vedic people borrowed alien forms of worship and deliberately made such consistant and basic transitions in them. Anyone who suggests that such an unnatural thing is possible would prove himself ignorant of human nature, of sentiments like devotion in the human heart and of the very science of history. Moreover, by saying so, we have to postulate, that those who devised these forms of worship dealing with divine sentiments in human life had themselves no living faith in them, that they were atheists and deceitful persons who exploited those sentiments for materialistic gains, and that, therefore, the guiding principle of human character is deceit, whether practised for a

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\* If at all, some alteration is possible in the case of latter type of Mantras, for their power is not inherent but derived from the blessings of the presiding deity. Different people are, therefore, found practising the processes of worship of the same minor deities with Mantras in different languages. But this practice neither reaches the various strata in society nor obtains recognition.

good or bad purpose. It would be far better for persons of such perverted brains, having such low ideas about human character, not to bother to understand human history at all.

The reason why I regard the so-called pre-historic Dravidian culture as a huge pretension set up by the researcheis will be clear, if the subject is considered against all this background.\* Even the worship of trees, snakes and the like are in keeping with Vedic culture. Although the Rgvedic people recognized both the Nirguna (formless) and Saguna (imageful or embodied) worships or the worship of the *Rita* and the *Satyam*, it is obvious that they were chiefly worshippers of the latter.

The controversy is only whether they worshipped idols or not. I personally think that they were worshippers of images in some measure. The verse (कृष्ण  
मर्त्यं द्विजाति दशमिर्तुम् N-24-10) "Who buys this Indra of mine for ten cows?" is extremely clear and the words एन मे पुर्वदत् "return him to me afterwards" are particularly so clear that they simply could not connote any meaning other than some material object like an idol. What does it matter if a Griffith does not accept it? The word (एनम्) 'enam' is used to indicate Indra. It could not bear the meaning "an exchange fixed for earning the favour of Indra and if it is deliberately forced on

\* Among the exhibits at Mohenja Daro there are two pictures ("?") one depicting two faces coming out of a branch of a tree and another depicting a similar scene, the number of the faces being six. This has led to a surmise that these might be spirits haunting the trees. But another case is equally likely that since they have been found even in such a culture like that of Mohenja Daro they contain a much more meaningful symbolism. The same is revealed by a casual glance of the Rgveda. In the celebrated hymn "Asya Vāmasya" there is reference to birds in the form of the soul and oversoul (*jīva* and *śiva*) eating the bitter and sweet fruits grown on the tree of Brāhma and another reference to a goat taking care of six worlds. It is quite possible that the above exhibits eloquently bespeak these highest sentiments. But how could the Indological nazool be satisfied with this explanation?

he verse any words can be interpreted in any sense at one's sweet will. Leaving alone this controversy, the Rgveda contains graphic descriptions of the actual forms of deities Indra is described as having a yellow complexion and his chin has also been referred to. Golden chains around the necks of Maruts have also been referred to There are allusions to actual conversations and (even touch) with the deities There is no reason why all these passages be interpreted only metaphorically If there was so much experience of realizing these deities, image worship in some form or the other is not only possible but quite probable. The tree and the snake are natural elements in this image worship. There is some truth in saying that image worship came into vogue through a symbolism of the original. The Rgveda contains descriptions of the tree of Samsāra having its root above and branches below as pictured in the Gita and of the celestial tree in mid-ocean (क स्त्रिय वृक्षो निरुच्छो मध्ये अस्ति । I, 182 and निरुच्छा वृक्षा उपरिकुण्ड 24 ). Just as in Buddhism the worship of the Bodhi tree naturally grew up and was not borrowed from other sources,\* it is quite likely to grow up among

\* "In either case it is a straining of terms, a misrepresentation or at best a misunderstanding, to talk of tree-worship. The Pipal was a sacred tree at the date of these sculptures, sacred, that is, to the memory of the beloved Master who had passed away, and it has acquired the epithet of 'Tree of Wisdom'. But the wisdom was the wisdom of the Master not of the tree or of the tree-god and could not be obtained by eating of its fruit" — Buddhist India Page 230,

Woodroffe says that animistic worship is most impossible

"It may be well doubted whether the world contains an idolator in the sense in which that term is used by persons who speak of 'the heathen worship of sticks and stones' According to the traveller A B Ellis ('The speaking peoples of the Gold Coast of West Africa') even 'Negroes of the Gold Coast' are always conscious that their offerings and worship are not paid to the inanimate object itself, but to the indwelling God, and every native, with whom I have conversed on the subject has laughed at the possibility of its being supposed that he would worship or offer sacrifice to some object as a stone"—Shakti and Shakta, Page 279.

any other people in a similar manner and need not be traced to any alien source. Similarly snake-worship is also even more likely to grow up independently among different people. If in the dense forests of yore there was any creature which was regarded as their deadliest enemy, by people, who barely covered themselves with a loin cloth and who had nothing to wear like the modern gaiters, it was the snake. The obvious reason is that its movements are imperceptible and it can move about anywhere without any obstruction. Wild beasts like the tiger and the lion, though equally ferocious, are not unnoticeable like the snake. In such circumstances it is quite natural to feel that protection from such a deadly enemy depends entirely on divine grace. It is just like the British Government which used to maintain armed forces on the Afghan border and pay hush money to the Afridi tribes. It is our notion that behind every material entity there is a divine counterpart and the worship of trees, snakes and the like has come into vogue through an extension of this very idea. The theosophical notion, that in all sub-human species there are group souls as their mental faculty has not as yet developed (though difficult to comprehend) contains much truth. It is just like the movements of an army which depend on the commander, despite the fact that every individual in it has a life of his own to a limited extent. In such circumstances once this presiding deity is propitiated everything else is taken care of as a matter of course. This concept of the divine (*Adhidaivika*) being in the background of all the material (*ādhibhautika*) is Vedic in origin and character. It is not found even among the Parsis, who have seceded from us, not to speak of other religions. Since this concept is Vedic, the worship of snakes, trees and the like following from it is also Vedic. People who worship snakes and trees anywhere on the globe, though in a primitive condition to day, have presumably picked it up from the Vedic people. The a division of the whole cosmos into three layers, namely, the material (*ādhibhautika*),

the subtle or divine (*ādhidaivika*) and the spiritual (*Adhyātmika*) is the conception of Vedic people only. According to the Sāṅkhya theory of Satkāryavāda (that is concordance between cause and effect) the treatment of all these as being formed through the expansion or contraction of one and the same substance is a purely Vedic concept. Among the Chaldeans deities are divided into three higher and lower categories. The Muslims built up the concept of seven heavens one on top of the other, but these notions are different from the Vedic concept. Their concept of deities is not that every material entity has, at its source, some divine entity. According to them gods are like sovereign rulers ruling over other worlds just as in Vedic culture the individual soul is supposed to rule over the world by virtue of his accumulated merit until its store is exhausted. The Vedic concept is essentially different from this. This is why the Vedic Rsi discerns rivers in the firmament, comprehends fire in water, and can divide Time into several different ages such as the divine and the human. This tripartite division of creation is apparent, even from the Rgveda as will be shown in the next chapter. The Brāhmaṇa Works and the Upaniṣads have adumbrated it, with great perspicuity and even if these works are pronounced to be of later date there is no basis for asserting that their tradition did not exist in the Rgvedic Age.

Thus the study of the Rgveda cannot be complete, as said in the Mahābhārata, without the help of the Itihāsa and the Purāṇas. Most of the prejudices disappear, if this is once clearly understood. The hobgoblins of Dravidian culture, the imaginary differences between the Māntrik and the Sūta culture, the invasion of the Āryans and the posteriority of the Rgveda to the battle of the ten princes all disappear into the thin air and an altogether new edifice of Vedic culture is visualized. The human mind stands astonished at its hoary antiquity and vast sublimity, and yet, unlike the British scholar venturing a guess

that the caves of Ellora suddenly emerged from the womb of the earth, no reasonable thinker worth the name would rest satisfied by saying that such a magnificent structure of cultural development suddenly emerged from the subterranean world. The Vedic people, who were after all great intellectuals, could obviously not rest satisfied with it, and have in their own way dwelt on the origin of this culture. We have now to see what their view of it was, which would bring this portion to a completion. The concept of the Vedic people regarding the origin and the maintenance of creation, and the duration of the existence of the human species on it, was infinitely more sublime and all-embracing than that of the Persians, Chaldeans, Jews and even the most advanced modern Europeans. The Iranians assign a period of 12 millenia to the existence of this universe (*Bundahis, Chapter I—Sacred Books of the East*). The Jews put it at 8 millenia and modern Europeans, while they regard the earth without human beings, as crores of years old, confine the duration of human existence on it to not more than 200,000 years and treat the period of human culture, unfortunately, as not more than 20,000 years.\* In the Rgveda on the other hand there are any number of references to the infinity and eternity of both Time and the earth, as also to the hoary antiquity of the human race. But as this subject legitimately falls within the category of the Itihāsa and the Purānas more than that of ritual prayer or sheer philosophy, its entire discussion has been retained only in the tradition of that branch of literature. We have, therefore, to draw upon, what Dr Ketkar terms the Sūta literature, for a thorough understanding of the subject. One need not be taken aback at the conventional and symbolical method, by which the earth and stellar celebrities have been described in the Purāna works in their present form.

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\* In spite of the geological, anthropological and astronomical evidence they still persist in doing so

The ancient people had full faith in the science of Yoga, whatever the modern think about it. But the principles of this science are not to be laid bare to all and sundry. The Purāna works have, therefore, included them, among several other things, which they have expressed in a cryptic manner. As the Purānas constituted the only form of literature for the common people in that age, every thing from the highest philosophy down to interesting tales and juvenile literature, consisting of tales of birds and beasts, was, as it should have been, included in Purānas themselves. While collecting such an omnibus store of knowledge useful for all people the Purānas have incorporated within themselves, a body of information about various sciences, exactly as it was in the original. They never bothered about analysing or elucidating it. During the most modern recension of the Purānas, an attempt has been made to piece together whatever information was available to any of them. Thus ordinary things mentioned in the Purānas will, because of their very ordinary character, be seen to be the most ancient. It is obvious that they have remained uninterpolated (unaltered) and hence are the commonest. Cosmology and dynasties are such portions among them, and contain nothing which is secret or secretive. But such is not the case with descriptions of geography and astronomy. They contain a mixture of the science of Yoga and some popular notions. We shall, however, not enter into the subject, as it has no direct bearing on the present description, and see with the help of cosmology and dynastic accounts what the Vedic people thought about Vedic culture.

So far as the origin, maintenance and destruction is concerned, Vedic people were, in a sense, evolutionists. I have said, "in a sense", because the evolutionists know only evolution but the Vedic people understand both evolution and involution. The Vedic people do not say that God created the universe merely by a

miracle e. g. by saying "let there be light and there was light." They say that it gradually came out of basic substance by a certain process, and hence hold that even at the time of destruction, it will pass through a certain process. In order to maintain some order in this process of the gradual manifestation of the basic substance, "knowledge and will" have some consistent function in the initial stages of this manifestation. This synthesis itself is called 'tapas'. The Rgveda says that 'rita' and 'satya' were created out of solidified tapas. The Vedas alone give an order of the process of creation, quite contrary to that given by other people. They do not say that God created light but that he created the night from which came the ocean and this is a very significant difference. It is, of course, not possible to dilate on this point here. In this 'ocean' was created our earth, on which man gradually came to be born according to the Vedic view. It is at the same time believed that this happened in the dim distant past. In the Bhāgawata and other works it is said that the Prajāpati could bring forth the human race after the efforts at creating trees, animals and the like. According to Vedic culture man has been living on this earth since times immemorial. It also holds that the entire human race has for a long time been on this earth with some degree of culture and not altogether without it. Several upheavals on this globe, such as a heavy deluge, might have caused several human migrations and in their wake several cycles of cultural evolution and involution; but in some part of the earth or the other tradition of the cultured man has remained unbroken. They further hold that during the present age India has had the enviable fortune, when the human race was divested of its culture, by an all over deluge or a similar catastrophe, of re-imparting culture to the rest of the world, while keeping the cultural torch burning (This reminds me of what Kālidās said about Aja, the son of Raghu, namely

that the son took after the father as one lamp lighted from another Indus thus kept the torch burning and lighted from it similar other torches). According to the Vedic view the tradition of the cultured human race, at any rate in India, has come down for millions of years not to speak of thousands of years and India has been conducting the mission of imparting cultural principles to the rest of the world. In the course of such attempts India had at some stage or the other covered the whole globe like the European nations of today. Vedic culture as it is known now, has developed from Indian culture at that stage. The picture of the Aryans envisaged by Dr. Ketkar in the Rgveda which he relegates to a pre-Mantrik period – consists of these very people. The Dravidians, Turanians, Summerians, Brāhmīns and such other races, whose bones were unearthed by modern researchers, lived within the body of this very culture. A prosperous nation naturally consists of several races and maintains communication with several people. Indian languages bear resemblance to the Ostrik. The Samskr̥t word ‘nagna’ becomes ‘nagoo’ in old Saxon; ‘haom’ is found even in the Avesta. Malabari teakwood is found in the city of Mugeer; the Rgvedic ‘manna’ is changed to ‘mina’ and is used in Chaldea. Words like ‘taimat’ and ‘urugul’ are found in the Atharvaveda and the Vedic ‘Brhaspati’ lauded as Gajānana in the Purānas is found among Red Indians in the same latter form. The reason for all these common characteristics is the same, as stated before. It is for the same reason that cultural traits similar to that of India are found from Kamaschatka in the east to the Magaleen Straits in the west and in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans. To argue, that Vedic culture was made up of motley pieces\* from

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\* A peculiarity about such analogy is that all important resemblances of people of all parts of the globe are only found with the Vedic people. They are not even found between other peoples themselves.

all these quarters, would do credit only to the perverted intellect of the European researcher. The only direct, logical, straightforward and unassailable conclusion is that all these are the relics of a dilapidated Vedic empire.

The account of the transition to different ages contained in the Purânas really refers to the extent of this pre-historic culture, which though old, has ever been new. It must be remembered in this connection that the culture of the Vedic people was chiefly concerned with the growth of the inner life of man. From their point of view, culture has not much to do with how man talks or walks, whether he rides a bull or a buffalo or flies in a plane, whether he wears hides or silks, whether he eats from a leaf or a gold plate and whether he subsists on roots or revels in dainty dishes. All these things change with the time and clime. Human culture wears these things as externalia like, for instance, flowers of the season. Such a culture formulating the perfection or culmination of the inner life of man is known as 'Sanâtana Dharma'. The Vedic people hold that this Sanâtana Dharma, into which are rooted eternal principles regarding the individual soul, the world and God, had a tradition coming down from times immemorial to the present day, which has been unbroken and intact. The Vedic people do not insist on any particular individual or place in whom or where the origin of this Sanâtana Dharma can be located. They do not claim that the human being first appeared on the Indian horizon or that he alone first visualized the charming dawn. They have nothing to do with this. These things belong to such a hoary past that it is not possible to trace them and they have never undertaken the vain pursuit. They know only one thing, namely, that from times immemorial the people of India have been watering and nourishing this time-honoured tree of Sanâtana Dharma. The history of a very small recent fragment of this long period is available to us and this has

mostly been narrated by the *Itihāsa* and the *Purānas*. The *Purānas* do contain accounts of the upheavals before Manu, but a consistent description and account of dynasties are available only from Manu downwards. Even the *Rgveda* mentions Manu alone as man's ancient ancestor. It is quite possible that these pre-Manu upheavals took place at a stage when the Himalaya mountains had not emerged from the ocean, and, when according to geology, there were large tracts of land in place of the present oceans. These tracts of land are likely to have furnished the scene for these happenings. To some extent or the other, modern scientists believe in such transitions in human culture in various places. This is what Dr. Ketkar means when he says that "all cultures do not develop uniformly, nor are their ages contemporary, that is, the stone age of one nation may be contemporary with the iron age of another". The only difference is that in all matters, the notions of modern scientists are miserably circumscribed and depend too much on geological surmises and archaeological finds. In view of the fact that these archaeological exhibits are next to nil, as compared with the vast period of human history ranging from two to four millenia, the science of geology cannot be taken as a reliable guide in this subject.

From the history of the Indian people (howsoever cursory), who have preserved the *Sanātana Dharma*, written in the *Itihās* and the *Purānas*, it will be patent that all Indian traditions have been laid down with a view to maintaining this *Sanātana Dharma* for all time. It has already been observed, that they were not mere evolutionists. Those people with a towering genius who had visualized the great principle that no process can long continue in a perfect stage but is soon followed by a reaction, had also recognized that the Indian people had passed the acme of their prosperity, and were on the downward path of involution. In order to secure that Indians should not perish during this involution, but should again raise their head, in other words, in

order to make their culture proof against the cycles of evolution and involution they, exerting themselves to the utmost of their intellectual powers and harnessing all their knowledge of things, created a mechanism which is called the Vedic Dharma consisting of four Varnas and four Ashramas. The literature which elucidates dharma and is useful for its propagation, is called the Literature of the Vedas. A portion of it containing the sacred hymns is called the Rgveda. The Veda and the Vedic religion, having for its quintessence the Varna-Ashrama system, is a discipline required for the attainment of certain specific ideals and has not much to do with individual salvation. Any human being in any part of the world adopting the path of Yoga and maintaining the principles of the Sanātana Dharma is as much capable of attaining salvation as a person following the Vedic system of Varna and Ashrama. (I have dilated on this topic in two of my earlier works in Marathi, namely "The Biography of Shree Anna Saheb Patwardhan" and "The Reorganisation of Vedic Culture").

The same is the import of several stories contained in the Purānas. It is said therein, for instance, that the human race at a certain stage belonged to Hamsa Varna. It is said in a conversation in the Mahābhārata that all people had formerly only one Varna named Sukla Bhāswara (that is Brāhma) and that the Four-Varna system was a later growth. It is also said that the letter 'Om' was the only Veda which was made into three Vedas by Purūravas (These three Vedas include the Atharva Veda which was not treated as an independent Veda in the earlier times because it was in fact an applied science teaching how the other Vedas have to be actually used for attaining specific effects and also because it contained both self-evolved and derivative mantras). This, however, does not mean that it is recent.\* When the sage Vyāsa introduced

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\* Dr. Winternitz goes to the extent of treating the Atharva Veda as contemporaneous with the Rgveda and even regarding some of its portions as pre-Rgvedic.

a new order of Vedic studies, he found a place for this Atharva Veda, just making the Three Vedas into four. Thus, although the institutions of the Veda and the Four Varṇa system are in essence created by man, yet there is nothing in them which man can claim as his original invention. They are like the fundamental principles of the science of electricity which man harnesses for his purpose and which are yet beyond his creation. The Vedic people, therefore, regard both the Vedas and the Four-Varna system as eternal and self-emanated. This view is uniformly writ large on their extant literature. It is said everywhere that the Vedas are boundless and the extant portion represents only a titlile of them. In the Satapatha, some of the pre-Vedic views have been controverted. Pāṇini mentions earlier grammarians. Yāskā says that there were about a dozen earlier commentators who tried to interpret the Vedas. Works like the 'Manusmṛti' are patently abstracts of 'admittedly' original works. All these facts lend support to this view. If the original works disappear and abstracts attain popularity it is an indication of the intellectual decline of a people. It is customary to say that old is gold, but the sentiment of respect of the Vedic people does not belong to this category but contains an element of truth as the decline in their literature will show. In any other nation of the world the popular notion is to locate the acme of prosperity in the past and to deem the present as a period of retrogression. But the Indian view fundamentally differs from it. It embodies the principle of evolution as well as involution. In keeping with their axiom in their cosmology, viz., that the microcosm is identical with the macrocosm, they have developed the concept of four yugas (ages) from a day to Infinity. The reference in the history of the Chaldean people that ten Paurāṇic personages ruled for 4,00,000 years, is a stray relic of the Indian concept of the yugas.

In other words there is adequate evidence in the Rgveda itself to conclude that Indian culture reflected in the Rgveda had reached a sufficiently high stage of perfection to entitle it to be regarded as a deductive Culture. Similarly, if we study the Rgveda from the Rgvedic texts themselves, as suggested by MacDonnel, it will be seen that it (the Rgveda) contains the picture of a culture of a hoary ancient past, prior to the battle of the ten princes, whatever the date of this battle be. Even a minor incident would make it clear. The Rgveda reveals the evolution of the sacrificial institution up to the stage of the horse sacrifice. It contains charming descriptions of the conquest of quarters by rulers and their roaring prosperity. The description of the munificent alms given by rulers like Bhāvaya would dazzle one's eyes. Pearls and jewels are mentioned in luxuriant abundance, allusions to plenty of gold beggars description in Chaldean and other literature Gold was not only used in clothes and utensils but for making chariots. In spite of so much super-abundance of gold and a knowledge of its use, the sacrificial utensils were all wooden and Lord Soma had to share only two stones. How can we account for this anomaly? The reason is, either they are the relics of a stone age retained by the Vedic people, as suggested by European scholars and this hypothesis is much more reasonable and convincing, or the Vedic people saw some scientific propriety in maintaining only wooden utensils in sacrificial procedure and in crushing Soma leaves by stone implements alone. Whatever the case may have been, these notions had their origin ages before the Rgvedic hymns were composed. The development of the sacrificial institution from such an early stage to the stage of the horse sacrifice, and the growth of knowledge up to the stage of comprehending the scientific propriety of the procedure of the sacrificial institution, cannot be covered by a century or two.

The Indian view, about the Vedic people who preserved Vedic culture, and who are today termed Indian Aryans, and whose complexion was originally yellowish, fair or darkish unlike the pale whiteness of the Europeans, is also peculiar. European savants while propounding that originally there were four human races whose admixture accounts for the present communities, miss one point altogether. They do not allow for a possibility, that a mere change in time and clime may also gradually alter the original human race, or even render an altogether new race possible. Some scientists say that a new human race is emerging in California today, which shows that they are beginning to entertain such an idea. This is not opposed to the principles of evolution. Just as, on account of the peculiar way of life, the tail of a monkey has now no specific function in man but is surviving in the form of coccyx, even so, it is not impossible that through a special way of life and through a constant exercise of specific internal organs, the capacity of the outside limbs may also be modified. The theory of psycho-physical parallelism even renders such an effect imperative. The Indian people, too, from Vedic times to the present day, have had complete faith in the interaction between body and mind. They believe that the present Aryan race evolved from the pre-Vedic Aryans thoroughly adhering to the fundamental principles of the Sanātana Dharma in India itself, and that it was from here that it spread all over the world. It is obvious that the original language of this race was Samskr̥t from the very beginning. It is therefore, even possible that the Vedic language, far from being the mother of Samskr̥t was a deliberately devised mode of Samskr̥t with the object of maintaining scientifically the mantrik character of Vedic hymns. This language is now known as the Chhāndasa language. The Rgvedic hymns were called 'chhāndas' as they secretly embodied the power of the Mantras. The root 'chhad' in the Samskr̥t language connotes covering. I have elaborated these notions as the notions of the

Vedic people and it is not the purpose of this chapter to prove them by the modern method of research

Vedic people had similar views about the structure and the period of Vedic culture. The birth of an institution created with a specific ideal coincides with its institution. ( In the English language also the root 'to institute' itself means to create for a purpose ). Real history of such an institution dates from the moment of its creation and must be in keeping with its fundamental principles The same is the case with this problem also. We have nothing to do with the age prior to Rgvedic culture Assuming that the Sanātana Dharma of that period was similar to its counterpart today and that it is perfectly acceptable to us, the Vedic people are of the view, that a study of Vedic culture which ignores its special character that it was created for the attainment of a specific ideal, is no real study and does not deserve any attention by those who accept this special feature of it. This is why they deem as extremely strange any opinion hazarded by any stray moderner on a question casually based on evidence from the Rgveda or pre-Rgvedic age for reasons best known to himself.

## EIGHT

### A GLIMPSE INTO VEDIC CULTURE

In the foregoing pages, an attempt has been made, after a general consideration of the Rgveda and Rgvedic culture, to point out certain shortcomings in the research done upto this time and to point out the new lines on which fresh research should, hereafter, be carried out. In this chapter I propose to depict briefly a picture of Vedic culture, as it will be seen, after these shortcomings are avoided and research conducted on new lines indicated. Really speaking it is this topic which should have been treated in much greater detail in this book, but this cannot be done for two reasons In the first place it would inordinately increase the voluminousness of the book which, in its turn would even render its publication impossible, and secondly, it would be more appropriate to reserve it for a separate volume as it constitutes an independent subject altogether. A culture has naturally several aspects and each of them has to be extensively studied. From this point of view, even Rgvedic research needs a much more exhaustive and detailed study. It could be infinitely more advantageous, if different persons were to take up different aspects, instead of this gigantic task being attempted by a single person like myself. I think that if research is carried on these proper lines, it is not impossible that a time may come when a separate volume will have to be written on each separate aspect of Vedic culture. I cannot attempt it for the present as my study of the Rgveda falls

considerably short of such requirements I shall, therefore, generally attempt here to present what picture we get, even if we take a bird's-eye view of the Rgveda, in the light of the research-principles enumerated above. If learned scholars feel that there is some element of truth in the views I have expressed about the science of research, keen students of the Rgveda would of their own accord brace themselves to the task as said above I need not be anxious on that score I shall, therefore, confine myself to elucidate, in this chapter, the principles discussed heretofore, only to the extent they need such an elucidation, and no further

If Rgvedic culture is to be described there are two ways of doing so In the first place we have to show whether and how far it fits in with the general definition of culture given by us. In this connection we have to explain its nature in the light of our definition of culture, assess its value in world history and indicate its importance and function. We have also to trace its growth from its early origins, examine its present state and discuss generally how humanity would visualize its future. Secondly, we have to depict analytically and in detail what information we obtain from the Rgveda about its various branches and sub-branches. Of these two elements the first has been adequately dwelt with in the foregoing books and any further discussion of these points may smack of repetition I would, therefore, entreat the reader to bear in mind that such a possible repetition is occasioned by the needs of an independent chapter. At the very beginning of this work, we have defined culture according to which culture has to be studied in its three elements, namely, Philosophy or Metaphysics, Cosmology and Physical environment. We shall follow the same order here as well

### Vedic Philosophy

Even from the Rgveda itself, it will be seen that its philosophy is more advanced than any other in the

world. An indigenous scholar like Mr. Kashikar who is in the leading strings of European savants observes that the social condition of the Rgvedic Āryans being generally of a primitive character, we do not find in the Rgveda a clear distinction between religion and philosophy. But such a statement is fraught with a serious shortcoming, viz., that in the inductive stage it is impossible to reconcile culture, religion and philosophy. But culture can also be in a deductive stage in which religion and philosophy are not markedly different. In that condition it has already passed the stage when these two are different and has come to a stage when religion serves as an applied science to philosophy, a fact which European scholars do not even dream of. They are habituated to treat religion and philosophy as two different departments and when they do not find such a watertight division they stamp it as ignorance and primitiveness. They then allow their imaginations to run riot, coin abundant expressions like 'Henothelism', Anthromorphism and the like to parade their intellect, and what is stranger, indigenous scholars also step into their shoes. An excellent example of how indigenous scholars try their best to thrust our sciences into the Procrustean bed of European terminology can be found in Prof. R. D. Ranade's "Mysticism in Maharashtra". One cannot but be astonished at his characterization of the 'types' of Mahārāshtrian saints as Activists, Democrats, etc. I had once asked him, since Fascism and Bolshevism are other current coins in the present-day world, which of the Mahārāshtrian saints he would brand as Fascist or Bolshevik. "Many men many minds" It is, therefore, not out of the common to classify human nature into Fascistic or Communistic but according to our sciences sainthood transcends the considerations of the grosser flesh and cannot thus be categorized. It is not, therefore, in keeping with our tradition and fact to apply this routine method even in describing the categories of saints. The unique character in the sainthood of every one of the

above mentioned celebrities consists in the various experiences, either transcendental or extra-sensory (though within the four corners of this manifested world) and in the different methods by which these results were obtained. It simply creates misunderstanding\* about these great saints to call one democratic, suggesting that the others were parochial or backward, or to brand one as activist hinting that the others were relatively indolent simply because they behaved in a way favourable to their respective circumstances.

The reason why religion and philosophy are not differentiated in the Rgveda, is its independent compilatory character. It is not a work devoted to the science or religion or philosophy and the references to religion and philosophy occurring in it are bound to be accidental and need not contain fine distinctions. Among the Vedic people religion and philosophy from the very outset, have been so much synthesised that they are deemed two independent sciences only for the sake of study. And if such a point of view is deliberately borne in mind, we do find religion and philosophy differentiated even in the Rgveda. We have already seen what value to lay by such bluffs as the earlier and later age in the Rgveda Assuming for the sake of argument that the 10th Mandala of the Rgveda is somewhat posterior to the other portions, it makes no

\* This is not to deny that there were differences among the saints But the differences were due to the attitude and the capacities of the people around, not to any essential differences in their sainthood or in the divine message, they gave to humanity These differences patently superficial resemble the different methods the teacher adopts to explain the same lessons to pupils of different capacities They are all agreed on major premises such as control of the senses, detachment from worldly pleasures, transcendentalism, other worldly life and the transitoriness of the worldly experiences In one word, the grand attitude of renunciation resounds in the Upanisads, and no saint in any time or clime has struck a discordant note Even the so-called activist Rāmdās has said that one who is intent on seeking his ultimate good must renounce everything and set out on the grand journey

difference to this problem. Two works written in two different stages of one and the same stabilized culture do not culturally differ from each other despite minor differences. At the most, it would reveal some difference in outward circumstances which constitute a third element in the study of culture. Whatever the difference between Jñāneśwara's *Jñāneśwari* (1290 A. D.) and Rāma Vallabha's 'Chamatkārī' commentary on the *Gītā* (16th century A. D.) from the linguistic point of view, there is no difference in the philosophy, cosmology and Dharmashāstra (science of religion) contained in these works. Similarly, the 10th Mandala of the *Rgveda* does not contain a single item which is basically inconsistent with the contents of the first nine Mandalas. True, the 10th Mandala, contains some features *not found* in the first 9 Mandalas. But they do not prove, that it is essentially different from them. They only connote a peculiar method of the compilers in making such collections. In view of these facts, the trait common to the research scholar to single out three or four hymns from the 10th Mandala and graciously to grant the little philosophical reflection in the so-called later *Rgvedic* Age, reflects only carping narrowness of these scholars. Really speaking the philosophy elaborated and elucidated in the hymn of creation and such other hymns in the 10th Mandala is seen uniformly pervading the first 9 Mandalas.

Philosophy takes rise in the minds of men, when, after the growth of his intellect, he begins to question the real nature of this phenomenal world palpable to his senses and to think of the perplexities about the world cognized and the cogniser. and further asks himself the master question "Who Am I"? Hence in order to asses the development of his philosophy we must first ascertain the extent of the development of his psychology. It is for this very reason, that even in modern times the study of philosophy starts with psychology. We shall, also, therefore,

start with psychology. So much misunderstanding prevails about the Rgveda, that even undertaking the risk of repetition, it is necessary to remind the reader that it is a collection of hymns and not regular treatise on any science. A systematic treatment of psychology will of course, therefore, not be found in it. It may be found to contain scientific conclusions as a result of such systematic study and the Rgveda abounds with them. It was, for instance, the established proposition of Rgvedic Aryans that the body of man though it consciously carries out its routine functions, is itself non-sentient, that the individual soul (jīva) resides in it and carries out its functions through its instrumentality\* and that this body which seems, therefore, material and spiritual at the same time, carries on its work. Thus they were fully aware of the principle that the individual soul (jīva) transcends the body and survives it. They also knew that this body-soul connection (cognition) takes place through the instrumentality of the mind (mānasa), the intellect (buddhi) and the various organs (indriyas). They had also the knowledge that what we grossly and glibly call organs (indriyas) are only material tenements and the really functioning indriyas which are subtler reside separately from those external senses and within them and also that they are derived from the elements of the powers of the various deities pervading the universe in the form of different Powers. From this point of view the verse सर्वं उष्णं-स्तुति वात आत्मा । in the 16th hymn of the 10th Mandala is of paramount importance for it gives a very clear idea of the indriyas like the eye and the piāna. It is said in this verse itself that there is unborn (aja) portion in this material body which because it is not born, does not even die. Even fire cannot burn this unborn portion and it is worthwhile remembering that God fire is prayed only in order to heat it, not to

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\* जीवो मृतस्तु चरति स्वधाभि । I, 164.

destroy it. They had also the full knowledge that all the functions of the individual soul are carried on by this unborn portion on the one hand and the material body on the other, in the order described in the following verse in the Gita. इदियाणि पराण्यादुर्तिद्वयेष्ये पर मन । मनसस्तु परायुद्धिर्यैवुद्धे परस्त्वा सः ॥ It is clearly stated in the Rgvedic passage, (I, 139-2) that the deity in the form Mitrā-Varuna was visualized in a special stage. In the beginning it was palpable only to the subtle intellect (buddhi), after which the mind (mānasa) realized it and it was subsequently that the subtle organs and the gross organs visualized it, just as saints like Shri Tukārām visualized God in concrete form. This verse ought to be deemed most important from the point of students of the Rgveda. It is perfectly in consonance with the cosmology of the Vedic people. It elucidates the real character of Vedic deities. If we invert this rule about the operation of the divine principle we have the science of practical affairs and it is also in keeping with the principle of the Gita as already pointed out. The repetition of the "Akṣa" (अक्ष) in the verse उक्ते इत्याधिसम्भु अपश्याम् । हिरण्यं धीभिश्वमनसा स्वेभिरक्षमि सोमस्य स्वेभिरक्षमिः ought to be specially understood. It is with a purpose that the term "akṣa" in one place refers to Soma.\* Shree Bābā Sāheb Patwardhan, ignoring this aspect proceeded to translate it as "to our eyes directed towards Soma". Even Chitrāva Shastri has misinterpreted the term 'Dhibhīḥ' as by our actions" and has mistaken the word which is in the genitive to be in the dative. The genetive case is really to be explained on the basis of expression सर्वे चक्षुर्गच्छति वात आत्मा । in the 10th Mandala but the error is due not to Chitrāva Shastri's mistake but to Sāyanāchārya's superficial commentary. Just as Mallinātha's commentary on

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\* Later literature regards Soma as the presiding deity of mind. The idea is implied here सोमस्य अक्षमि means "with the subtle organs of the mind".

Kālidāsa's works is frequently useful merely from a linguistic point of view but does not serve to elucidate the poetic import, so also is the case of Sāyanāchārya's commentary from the point of unravelling the heart of the Rgveda. The reason is, most probably, that he did not probe deeper into them as he had in view only the ritualistic character of the Rgveda and not the interpretation of the verses from various points of view. The Vedic people further believe that man is born with a mind ( जनकेण नन्ता जान्ते । IX, 68-5 ). The power of this manasa is in varying proportions in different men some of whom are extremely potent ( मनोषि ). They also believe that the power of the intellect ( buddhi ) may with the help of concentration be enhanced to the extent of performing great miracles. The wonders wrought by a concentration of the intellect ( buddhi ) are frequently described. It is repeatedly pointed out that the deities, though transcending the manasa ( परमदेवता ) can yet be vividly visualized by the gross indriyas as well. In sheer ignorance in this faith of the Vedic people occidental scholars and their oriental peers jump to the conclusion that the descriptions of actual doings of deities refer to some human race. There are utterances like हिरण्यकर्णं नग्नं गोऽ अग्नं तत्रो विष्वेतिवस्तु देवा । There are occasional references to the various passions, emotions and sentiments in the human heart such as good and bad desires ( mati, amati ), sensual appetites, wishes, cravings, hatred, jealousy, affection, hope and longing. They are perfectly alive to the momentariness of the human mind. They had deeply imbibed the principle that man's intense struggle for pleasure is entirely dependent on external circumstances and though it may seem to be successful for a time ( being only gross and momentary ), can never truly and wholly satiate the heart. It is for this reason that they have everywhere cherished a longing for lasting happiness. Nowhere else will a yearning for the light of knowledge - in order that perfect knowledge annihilate the darkness of ignorance -

be found in any other ancient literature. They were thirsting for a place, where all desires would culminate and perfect satisfaction (*Trpti*) and desirelessness (*niskāmatā*) would be obtained there (IX 113). All their moral principles and canons of external conduct were derived from this thirst or yearning. They had also paid attention to the manner in which a liaison between the gross and the immaterial takes place. They have realized the Vedantic principle that man, rendered imperfect by ignorance and also bound by it, does not comprehend his real nature. All these facts will amply elucidate how perfect their psychology was. Modern psychology, though it has elaborately classified and adumbrated the various branches of that science with a subtlety and amplitude of which it could be proud, has not yet marched even a single step in advance of Rgvedic psychology so far as the alpha and omega are concerned. In no other society, deemed contemporary with Rgvedic people, is even the slightest glimpse of psychology seen. They have not even the idea that there is a distinction between the subtle indriyas and their external tenements, nor have they a systematic classification of the former in the manner stated above. The Rgvedic people have also discussed man's power of speech at length. It has been clearly stated, that although the faculty of speech is connected with the mind, that is *manas*, and the intellect, that is *buddhi*, it is independent of them both and has originated from the divine power immanent in the human stuff (*pinda*). It is classified into four categories of which the first three can be realized or experienced only after a special preparation, while the fourth is used in common speech.

The lamentable neglect of the hymn "Asya Vāmasya" is simply amazing. It cannot be dismissed as belonging to a later age since its Rsi Dirghatama has several other hymns to his credit. They have, therefore, chosen the other method of conveniently explaining it away as a curious mystery. These research

scholars have hardly any idea that by so brushing it aside, they are depriving themselves of a precious jewel illuminating the heart of the Rgveda. It is true that this hymn contains certain enigmas but as these enigmas are to be explained from metaphysical point of view, these scholars, who are wedded to the wooden proposition that in the Rgvedic age philosophy had not at all developed, will simply find themselves unable to do it. Their essential mistake lies in the fact that this hymn is not, all of it, mysterious. It has also a philosophy couched in a language clear enough to eschew any mystery. There are several perspicuous verses which are most important and the verse in question is one of them. This verse has been the battleground of exegetic controversies from early times. In Sāyanāchārya's interpretation the fourfold classification of speech of the sponsors of the Mantra school has been cited and has to be admitted as being perfectly right. It is difficult to accept the interpretation of the Nirukta School (namely, that the fourfold classification refers to the three Vedas and popular speech) or of the Grammarian School (namely that it refers to grammarian categories). The word 'Manusya' is used here in a generic sense with a verb in the plural which proves the futility of the grammarian interpretation. All the four grammarian categories are spoken by all men though unconsciously whereas the verse in question clearly states that the first three categories are understood by the specially qualified, and it is only the fourth which is spoken by the generality of man. It has also been made amply clear by the expression "turyam vācho vadanti" (they speak the fourth language) that the common run of men not only do not understand the first three categories but cannot even pronounce them. We cannot accept Nirukta interpretation, namely, the classification into the three Vedas and the popular language for, although the meaning of the first three may be mysterious, their pronunciation has no mystery about it and

need not be beyond the power of the common man. The word 'parimita' (limited) connotes a natural process and not an arbitrary human action or else the words "manusyāh vadanti" would be meaningless. If we were to say that the limitations were imposed by learned men, it would not be acceptable to the sacrosanct science of research as it would lead to the inconvenient conclusion that the mode of pronunciation of the Vedas and the rule that the pronunciation of the three Vedas being confined only to the twice-born should pronounce them date back to the pre-Rgvedic times. There is a difficulty even from the point of view of orthodox scholars in interpreting this verse in this manner. Although the Brāhmaṇas had the exclusive privilege of teaching the Vedas the right of pronouncing them was extended to all the three upper varnas, why should then this verse confine it to the Brāhmaṇas and there too to learned Brāhmaṇas ? Similar difficulties lie in the way of other interpretations as well. The Rgveda abounds in references to the mysterious power of speech and to an unambiguous classification of speech into divine and human (VIII, 89). In all literature originating from the Vedas, the tradition of all these varieties of speech has been maintained intact. It is, therefore, but reasonable to take this classification as referring to four types—Parā, Paśyanti, Madhyamā, and Vaikhari,—which is consistent with all the above factors. A special feature of this verse is that it states this proposition, not as an enigma, but as an established principle. Although it does not name the four types, it clearly categorizes them.

Several people have now begun to assert that the Rgveda contains monotheism, but statements such as Rgvedic Rsis (sages) were in a sceptic stage and could not tell the exact and logical form of that One deity, are likewise baseless and borrowed. The hymn of creation breathes the Vedantic principle that the One supreme principle, though variously extended, transcends those forms, and hence the experience

which transcends the plurality cannot be explained beyond words such as "that is One" and "that is All-Power". The meaning of the last verse of the famous Nāsadiya hymn, viz. एतम् व्यज्ञ एव चोलन् सोऽन एव चोहि वान् । (The one Supreme presiding Deity of this universe dwelling in the highest sky may, probably, comprehend it - or perhaps He too does not) has been explained in Book III in the light of a quotation from Plotinus. The hymn of creation does not breathe scepticism about the fundamental principle, but only describes how human powers fall short of the capacity to comprehend it fully and describes it adequately. This hymn clearly indicates the fundamental principle in the words "अत्तेष्वात्म लभ्यन्ते चन् ।". It is the Rgvedic proposition that 'asat' evolved out of this fundamental principle and in its turn gave rise to 'sat'. We have already seen during the discussion on the word 'asura' how the word 'asat' here does not indicate absence (अन्तर) but the undifferentiated 'sat' as correctly interpreted by Sāyanāchārya. 'Sat' 'Asat' and the indescribable One which manifests itself through both these forms and yet transcends these two and is infinite and is full of activism are the basic substances of the universe within which all phenomenal operations take place. This 'asat' is itself termed variously in the Rgveda as 'ṛta' 'paramaryoma' and as transcending the 'anarikṣa'. Nowhere does the Rgveda pose the question what might have been the Creator's aim in bringing about the creation nor do we see either the question which imperishable substances were utilized by the Divine Power for this purpose, or its answer. The reason is that, there was no occasion for these questions to arise. Having once accepted that this (fundamental) One is unparalleled the only answer to any question regarding the origin of creation can be "it took place as a matter of course"; and the question "from what this phenomenal world expanded" can only be answered by saying that though it is one, it is variously

described by the learned. The Rgvedic rsis had recognized the secret that "it is I who am doing all this and it is because I do not understand this that I am bound by the Manas and am going round and round" (I, 164-37 and 31). Such being their view of the world and its basic principle, they held that the span of a hundred years life allotted to man and the objects to be enjoyed in order to live it are not the be-all and end-all of human life, that there was an ideal beyond these things and it was for the same ideal that we have to experience various objects, even while living the century of years. People who had no such ideal in their life were looked upon by them as 'asuras' (people of unregulated life) or 'ayajvās' (non-worshippers) and 'avratis' (people without any vows or discipline in life). In the Vedas all sorts of objects of enjoyment and all varieties of amenities needed to experience them have been repeatedly and insistently prayed for. While there is thus a deep desire to enjoy all kinds of riches, it is marked by the differentia that the real yearning is only for attainment of Godhood, the ultimate essence of human life and the steps leading up to and after it. The yearning is not only for attaining such Godhood for oneself, but also for begetting progeny which also would attain it. While they pray for a wife, progeny and prosperity, all these things are not to be intended to be ends in themselves, but as a means to an end, namely, to serve God and to obtain Godhood. Or else even the minor instance of Vamadeva would amply illustrate how they detested mere pleasures of the senses. This celebrated sage who had obtained a knowledge of his several preceding births, while yet in the mother's womb, insisted that he would in no case emerge from the usual passage which was the source of all filth. It was necessary to persuade and propitiate him. It is scarcely possible to find such supreme contempt for sensuous plesaures seen in this symbolism. In any other literature either contemporary or later the Vedic

rsis wanted material prosperity only as a means to attain their ideal, and their real satisfaction lay in becoming immortal by drinking soma in realizing Celestial light and in comprehending the Gods. The Rgveda, therefore, reveals to what extent they had fear of sin, a thirsting after purity and respect for and pride in character. They pray to Gods to protect them in such a way as not to make them swerve from the path of righteousness (VIII, 48-5) In no other literature of the period can we find notions such as man can obtain knowledge of gods, or as he can follow the path of Gods and even become God himself. The Light became familiar to the people after the Christian religion prayed for it, but in no other literature of the period are these thoughts so graphically and intensely brought out as in the 113th hymn of the 9th Mandala where the Vedic sage tells, in very clear words, what he desires. Says he, "Oh you sacred current, place me where there is eternal light and where celestial lustre has been stored up. Place me where King Yama the son of Vivasvan resides, where even heaven disappears, where there are water goddesses, Apodevi flowing briskly, place me in such a secret place and make me immortal, place me in the third celestial and highest grade of heaven where all places are full of lustre and light and make me immortal etc Place me where there are people who work both with and without motive, which is the original home of creation, where there is self emanating power and hence where there is satisfaction (and make me immortal). Place me where there is happiness and bliss, where there is joy and delight, where the desire, to get one's desires fulfilled, is gratified and make me immortal, and Oh you giver of joy continue to flow in your sacred current for the sake of Indra". In this passage both the flow of poetic inspiration and the exuberance of emotion are of such highest category that the heart of anyone, in whose veins Vedic blood flows, becomes one with the current of inspiration and shares its flow. No honest man would have the

courage even to compare this ambition of the Vedic Rsis with the Muslim version of heaven peopled by nymphs and eunuchs or other peoples concepts of heaven, placing similar pictures more or less of sensual enjoyments before peoples' eyes. People, who have the audacity to class the authors of such utterances as belonging to the primitive stage or those who claim that the Vedic rsis borrowed their culture, from such uncultured brutes as have scarcely gone beyond declaring only the real mother to be out of the pale of sensual enjoyment and whose imagination and desires solely centre on some spot to be reached after death where they could endlessly cater to their sense organs and appetites, and who could not themselves understand that real hell consists in ignorance and imperfections, are themselves merely brutish bipeds or souls puffed up with evil pride and jealousy. To sum up then, such was the philosophy of the Vedic rsis, regarding the individual soul with ten sense organs, his transitory life, the ultimate basic principle of this cosmos and the highest ideal of human life in the light of this principle. No human race could have reached such an idealistic stage until there had already been abundant thought about questions such as the nature of the process of obtaining knowledge, the very contact between the individual soul and the surrounding world and other metaphysical 'whys' and 'wherefores'. The Vedic sage very well knew, that the individual soul is derived from the Divine and although he does not know his own real nature, he can, through concentration of intelligence, come to know each and everything in this universe. Let us now proceed to see the cosmological concepts of the Vedic sages, the concepts covering the reality between the abovementioned notions of human life on the one hand and the indescribable One transcending the 'sat' and the 'asat' and replete with activism on the other. But before coming to this subject we must remember one thing, namely, that the Rgveda, like later literature, gives various classifications of one

and the same thing for various purposes. Such a variety of classification need not confuse or upset us or make us jump to the conclusion, that it connotes differences in different ages. It is quite possible that the difference was due to a *difference in purpose* and not in period. For instance, the authors of Purānas have given in their cosmological descriptions, a threefold classification of the universe (Brahmānda) viz, fourteen 'bhūvanas', seven lokas and three layers,—the material (Ādhibhautika), the divine (Ādhidaivika) and the spiritual (Adhyātmika). It is not proper, from this variety alone, to imagine that these classifications belong to different periods. The difference is due to a difference in the *fundamentum divisionis* in each.

### Vedic Cosmology

In the R̄gveda phenomenal creation has been variously described as being threefold, fivefold and sevenfold. In some places six 'lokas' are mentioned but chiefly there are three varieties, namely, 'bhoo', 'rāja', and 'antarikṣa'. Like the three gunas of Sāṅkhya philosophy, these three, though independent in character, are always found in combination and cannot separately express themselves in an independent form which leads to the various classifications. The concept of the material (Ādhibhautika), the divine (Ādhidaivika) and the spiritual (Adhyātmika) occurring in later literature are indicated by these threefold classifications. The whole cosmos is thus treated as tripartite and since each of these according to the modern concept of fivefold synthesis, contains elements of the others, each is treated as being threefold. This is why expressions like 'Trirochana', 'Trībhū' and 'Trirāja' have been used. These three varieties depend upon the varying degrees of density in the manifested phenomenal world. Granting that these terms have been somewhat loosely used, the tripartite character is consistently maintained. The sevenfold division is based on the principle of modern

scientists as well as sponsors of Tantra school, that the manifested world is characterized by phases (काः) and that its real nature is undulation of waves. This idea would become clearer from the seven notes and scales in the science of music. Other minor differences are included in them. The tripartite division is frequently referred to in expressions like, 'tridhātu' 'trisadha', 'tridhā', 'tridiva',\* 'tribandhu', 'trirūpa' and 'trihsapta'. The sevenfold division is also referred to frequently. We can form a notion about it from the seven notes in the three octaves. In certain hymns, for instance, the hymn to the river (the Nadisūkta) these ideas are very clearly brought out (X, 75). The passage प्र तत्त्वं नवाही has been explained by Sāyanāchārya by saying that these rivers, by becoming seven in each of the three worlds become threefold. The rays of the sun are seven, the metres (chandas) are seven, the heads of the fire-god are seven, the sages seven and last but not the least, the original notes are seven तां सप्तरेमा नमित्वन्ते। X, 71.

The seven sisters offer prayers; there alone are kept seven types of cows. Such is the striking importance and greatness of the number seven which is perfectly scientific. Similarly, although the Rgveda mentions twentyfive or thirty rivers it is really the seven rivers (saptasindhu) which are really deemed important. In another verse (X, 81-5) three abodes of Viśwakarmā, the highest, middle and the lowest, are cited. The description in the verse refers to these three varieties. God fire stays in three places. Soma is of three kinds. The plant soma, the miraculous power arising from it, the reference, viz., "What the Brāhmaṇas recognize as Soma cannot possibly be eaten by anybody at any time, it is simply impossible for mortal man to eat it" (X, 85-4)—are plenty in number. The bodies of deities and sages are of three kinds namely, their usual forms, the forms assumed by them

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\* त्रिधावद्दो वृषभो रोखीति।

by their miraculous power and their celestial, pure and true form abound in descriptions. Of the second variety there are descriptions such as that of the Maruts wearing necklaces round their necks and spears in their hands or that of Indra with a strong chin and yellowish-fair like the golden hue, or that of Brhaspati with a blue torso (back). The rsis will be independently described at a later stage but even among them there are varieties like sages with corporeal forms, the seven celestial sages, etc. There are references to the seven mothers (*saptamātā*) and twentyone mothers (*trisaptamātā*). All these references are so often repeated that one has to suppose that the authors making them were thoroughly acquainted with the whole order. The deities, rivers, fires and celestial species like the gandharvas are described according to their respective conditions as being threefold, twofold or of one kind. Their order if not properly understood may lead to recieation and if one is caught in the meshe of historical research one would never know the truth even at the expense of one's life.

The descriptions about the origin of the universe for instance, that 'sat' is born of 'asat', that the world has come out of "puskaraparna", or from trees or to Aditi cannot be properly reconciled until we remember the basical tripartite distinction stated above. Even as regards time there are three categories; time infinite, time measured according to human standard and time according to divine standard (X. 72-3). It is the Rgveda alone which, in view of so much power immanent in time has elevated it to Godhood. The 'Suparnachuti' in the Yajurveda makes it clear that a deity named Syena or Suparna is of the nature of time. The superimposition of the Northern Hemisphere on Aditi is not in tune with Rgvedic sentiments and is hence a figment of the imagination. It is clearly stated that 'Daksa' was born to Aditi, that Aditi was born to Daksa and that this Aditi gave birth to gods. It is also stated that Aditi with seven sons gene-

rated the Primitive Era ('Pūrvyam yugam'). The Northern firmament is an eternal miracle. Moreover, Aditi is not clearly explained by it. The above hymn will indicate which these two Aditis are. It is stated that "then were created the directions. From these shot up the tree of Samsāra. From the tree arose the earth and from the earth the directions". X, 72. 3. 4. In this quotation the first word 'asa' refers to the element of space or ether, while the second word 'asa' connotes the relative directions in the manifested world. It is also said that the world emanated from water. It is stated, moreover, that the earth originated from 'Hiranyagarbha' and also, that it proceeded from the one which transcends both 'sat' and 'asat'. All these statements can be properly coordinated and synthesized with reference to the fundamental principles of Vedic cosmology. The expression 'uttānapādāt' (that is from a tree) may either be metaphorical as in the first verse of the 15th Chapter of the Gita or may be a clarification to the effect that the earth was created in the manifest tradition starting from the original 'asa'. Where it is said that the world originated from 'Pu-skaraparna' the word 'Puṣkara' appears to mean only water because the idea of 'parṇa' (leaves) is not in the original (VI, 16-13). It is added by Sāyaṇāchārya. It is mentioned in several places that fire resides within water. The idea of fire residing even in water appears to be purely Vedic and does not seem to relate to fire in any contemporary literature whether Parsi or any other, whatever the research scholar may think.

They believed that in a universe, so created, there are different worlds (that is lokas), subtle and gross; among which there is a communication not easily susceptible to man's gross organs. It is, however, said that a human being may obtain a knowledge of them either by divine grace or through processes like concentration (dhyān). Prayers have been addressed to God for obtaining such knowledge. It is stated that the

sage Vaśistha had such knowledge. The claim of some interpreters that Vaśistha in some places connotes the sun does not seem to be correct, for his features and personal traits have been unmistakably delineated. He is said to be 'Daksīna-Kaparda' (with his hair braids on his right shoulder) and 'Shvityanch'. These traits make it clear that he was a being in some suprahuman category. It is clearly stated that Vāmadeva, while still in his mother's womb, had all knowledge. Says he, "I have comprehended, through concentration, the different worlds (lokas) attained by earlier sages." There is a description that the affairs of these seven worlds are mostly alike. That is to say, there, as here, we have rivers, mountains, political institutions, and rsis (sages). The only difference in them is that of gradually increasing knowledge, lustre, immortality and happiness, and yet there is hardly a sage of the stature of Vaśistha. It is also said that the common run of men might, at the most, obtain knowledge of this human world and one or two immediately adjacent worlds by penance and such other means, but that a knowledge of what is beyond is only possible in cases of gods like Visnu (VII, 99-1). Just as beings on the face of this earth have to depend on other worlds (lokas) so also beings in other worlds (lokas) have in some cases to depend on human beings. This very notion is the foundation of such institutions as sacrifice (Yajña) and Soma. The relations which gods bear to human beings is rooted, not in fear, but in friendship. Even in the most cordial prayers, we find not obsequiousness and importunate petition but a right rooted in love, and the language is that used by a younger brother to an elder brother, or by a child while addressing its parents or by a friend to another friend. Among no other people do you find such notions about the human beings. It is in this notion that we find the ultimate seed of the devotional path (Bhāvayoga) found among all saints worth the name, "of whatever grade" in all the countries of the world. It is the

utter ignorance of this privilege of the human being that makes European scholars, accustomed to the only one emotional sentiment found in Biblical hymns, to deny to the Vedic hymns the intense yearning of the Biblical prayers. Among all the several cultural differentia which mark out the Vedic people from any other and establish their identity and self-emanated character is this sublime greatness of the human being and the doctrine of 'karma' which lends it to him. The root of the idea sponsored by Mohammad, that heaven is the recompense for participation in war in the cause of God, is originally found among the Vedas themselves in the extract "by dying where brave people secure an excellent place for their ancestors" (यत् श्रावस्तान्वै दिवन्वत् प्रिया शर्म पितृगान् । VI, 46-12). It was simply impossible that a non-Vedic concept such as that souls after death lie in the grave and that on the day of judgment God gives them their due place, good or bad, could be found in the Vedas. According to the Vedas the subtle body, residing within the gross body of a man, is immediately decomposed, securing for him, in lieu of the deeds done by him, his due place as the inevitable result of those deeds. 'Go as directed by your acquired merit' is the injunction to the human soul (X, 16) who is asked to repair to heaven or to earth or to the waters wherever it is in its interest. Even God Fire is asked to bear him to the Worlds merited by him. The assertion that the concept of re-birth was not found in the Vedas would only do credit to the cocksureness of the research scholars. Euphemistically speaking it is not stated in the words in which these research scholars want; but in the "Asya Vāmasya" hymn, which is in the position of a crowning jewel to all other hymns it is stated in the clearest possible language divested of all metaphors. In the extract "having taken many births and being engulfed in the mother's womb he is immersed in an ocean of misery" (I, 164-31,32 स मातृयोना परिक्षेप्ता अन्तर्बुप्रजा: निर्क्षिमादिवेऽ). There is no metaphor whatsoever. To add to it, Yāska's commentary in the 'Nirukta' is excellent. The word

' Bahuprajāh' can only be interpreted as " Having taken many births" to be appropriate. Or else if a single birth was referred to, that is, if the individual soul had earned his place, good or bad, only by virtue of one birth, then the words ' Anipadyamānam' and ' Charantam' would have been rendered meaningless. Even outside the hymn " Asya Vāmasya" there are references to rebirth elsewhere.\* Vāmadeva is said to have visualized his births while yet in the mother's womb Vaśīstha's three births have been referred to, and although they may be explained away as metaphorical, the very concept of the possibility of taking several births unmistakably makes itself felt. It is clearly said about gods like Indra that they know all births ( VIII, 46 ). In the face of all these references it is logically imperative to say that the concept of re-birth was writ large on the Vedas, at any rate until some modern research scholar ventures to point out that it was impossible to find it there.

In the Bhagwat Gita it is said that from the ' yajña ' come the rains and from the rains the

\* In another passage ( VII, 8G-1 ) the words धौरात्मस्य महिना जनूमि have been used. The word " Janūmṣi " has only one direct meaning, namely, birth. It is difficult to understand why this interpretation should be rejected in favour of another, namely deeds. There is no other reason, except obstinate prejudice for doing so. Prof Kane in his " Rksāra Sangraha " ( Collection of Vedic verses ) has interpreted it as ' deeds ' and has suggested how the word " asya " may be taken with " Mahita " and how " janūmṣi " may be taken to mean every being and how " dheera " may be interpreted as full of intelligence. Yāska has in some places, even given this meaning. But where is the need for such a circumlocutary and if by the same process " Brahmaputra " is interpreted as the son of a Brāhmaṇa why should this meaning be rejected ? What is the root in the ' dhīra ' ? ' Dhi ' or ' Dhri ' ? Either the maruts or someone else are referred as having again gone into the mother's womb ( युज्ञाभृत्वमरिषे I-6-4 ) Even assuming that the sojourn in the womb is metaphorical, it does prove the notion of repeated birth, without which the simile would not occur. Among people unacquainted with the concept of re-birth, the idea of repeated sojourn in the womb would not naturally be found to occur as a familiar phenomenon even in poetry.

growth of food crops. Exactly the same idea has also occurred in the Rgveda. Such a yajña (to which 'tapas' is also alternative expression) or such 'tapas' is also a very important Vedic idea, it is not found in any other religion and is, therefore, entirely original. What is termed Brahmadeva or Hiranyagarbha in later literature occurs in the Rgveda under the name 'Dhātā' or occasionally as Prajāpati and also (as in the 10th Mandala) in an undisguised form as Hiranyagarbha (हिरण्यगर्भं समवर्ततायेऽ). It is stated that from his solid penance arose Rta and satya (ऋतं च सत्यं चाभिद्वात् पसोऽप्यजायत्). The expression, the universe was created out of 'tapas', means, in plain prose, that the creation of the universe follows certain rules and does not depend on the sweet will of any arbitrary power. The word 'tapas' occurs so frequently and is rightly interpreted so unambiguously in the Rgveda, that it has become a differentia of the Vedic people. 'Tapas' does not mean mere prayer or concentration (or a mental picture arising therefrom) or a mere storing up of merit. For all these there are independent and distinct terms in the Rgvedic vocabulary; and even while referring to the interpretation of the passage itself what additional merit had to be earned by the purest 'Hiranyagarbha'? The Vedic concept is that Hiranya-garbha had, in order to create the world, to assume a little impurity on purpose. It is said in other religions that there was utter darkness at the beginning of creation and that God created light. In the Rgveda, however, just the opposite notion is adumbrated. With the creation of 'rta' and 'satya' emerged the night and from it onwards came fourth the 'samudra-arpava' consisting of the basic ethereal element (which, too, is another remarkable differentia between Vedic and non-Vedic people). This statement is perfectly consistent with all later Vedantic principles. This very description occurs in the Rgvedic hymn of creation, though from a different standpoint, but even there

it is stated that the basic element evolved only through 'tapas'. In other words the entire universe is a scientific evolution. Yajña is only a form of 'tapas' and it is also regarded as a scientific concept. The word 'yajña' bears several interpretations in the Rgveda, one of which is the form of celebration popularly understood today. Yajurveda has distinctly mentioned it, ( यजुषा रक्षमाण । V, 62-5 ). The very same hymn describes the pillars driven into the sacrificial ground. Modern scholars have raised fantastic structures on this sacrificial institution and those among them who have no insight into the inner aspect of Vedic culture have pronounced it to be a social stratagem rooted in cunning or skill I have adumbrated elsewhere the scientific principle underlying the sacrificial institution\* If we juxtapose the above-mentioned brief picture of the cosmology of the Vedic people and the hymn नवैउपलन्त्रियसे न कष्ट्यसि देवा इतरपि पश्येभि सुगेमि । ( I, 162-29 ), the basic idea could easily be understood It shows that sacrifice itself was a perfectly traditional institute which gave rise to a very complicated technique not found among any other people. The subtle and fine ideas and the elaborate extent to which they were developed could be clear from the prayer "may the proportions of the sacrificial posts bring about our farewell" ( श नो मितय स्वरूणाम् । VII, 35-7 ). This extraordinary importance which came to be attached even to the proportions of sacrificial posts cannot be explained until they formed an essential ingredient of the successful accomplishment of a sacrifice. This makes one thing absolutely clear, namely, that the concepts of the Rgvedic peoples regarding their deities, whatever their origin and process of growth, bespoke their non-material, celestial character and the sentiment of the devotees that the sacrifice was a scientific technique based on the transcendental science of maintaining communication with those deities through the instrumentality of material substances. From this point of

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\* Shri Anna Saheb Patwardhan's biography.

view the whole hymn is extremely solemn, inspiring and appealing to the heart. Those who call the authors of such inspiring hymns sheer animists must themselves be clodpated. The proportions of the sacrificial posts is absolutely a rational thing. Mere animistic primitive people worshipping dead matter as such would not be found capable of such rational concepts.

Similarly the notion that when this human body with a soul inhabiting it carries on his day to day activities, it has within it, elements of different cosmic constituents, that after its death they again revert to their original quarters and that the individual soul alone proceeds to the abode earned by his own past deeds, is entirely Vedic and original. Even today, followers of the Vedic religion think and act on the basis of this notion. The ritual called 'sapiṇḍī karāṇa' which is one of the sixteen main sacraments is an emblem of this very notion. Even the obsequies rites of today (Srāddha) are grounded in the same notion. Though the individual soul does not need the subtle parts in the more advanced worlds, he does require them, while descending to the human world at the time of undergoing any birth. The basic concept in Srāddha is to deposit in his name in the banks of the intermediate worlds, as it were, (variously named as Agniśvätta, Dhumrālochana) some capital which would prove an asset to him in the form of his share of these elements and thus strengthen him from within, especially if he is reborn as a human being. In the hymn of Subhandhu in the 10th mandala, he has been recalled on this globe and while describing Indra's greatness in the 55th hymn, it is said that through his grace one who dies today begins to rebreathe tomorrow. These instances and the reasons already stated above amply bear out Vedic faith in reincarnation. So long as there are persons performing Srāddha the Vedic religion is to that extent intact as before.

Along with this concept of the subtle body constituted by the elements of several deities there is one

differentia marking out the Vedic people, namely, the power of speech and a science of this power built up by them. It has already been shown in an earlier chapter that the Vedic people knew two kinds of speech, namely, divine and human. They were also acquainted with the three, four or seven varieties arising out of a combination of these two forms. Besides the reference to four kinds of speech and their four names, there are references to three and seven kinds of speech also. Sāyanāchārya has everywhere interpreted the terms 'saptavāni' as seven rivers (according to the Nirukta words meaning 'vāni' are synonymous with those meaning water), but as already shown, this term must be indicative of the seven sacred utterances. The basic substance being of the nature of vibrations before manifesting itself as creation on any level, it is naturally termed water. This is why the word 'ap' in the Vedas occurring in the sense of deities is used in the plural. Although several names of rivers are mentioned in the Rgveda importance is attached only to the Saptasindhu and it is these seven celestial currents which Indra renders free for the good of the universe by repeatedly killing the demon Vrtra. Those who fantastically relate the Vedic word 'apsu' with the Chaldean 'abzu' and build equally fantastic edifices on its strength, must bear in mind that if the latter word is at all a cognate it belongs to a much later generation, that is, it is borrowed by the Chaldeans from the Vedic people. The concept that waters like deities ('āpo devatā') are multiple is not common to other people. There is no independent deity as 'apsu' in the Rgveda. The word occurs only in the plural number as it connotes the seven basic currents of water. Names of god fire like 'apsujit', 'apsushad' and 'apsujā' indicate His varieties. As already pointed out the concept of fire within water is exclusively Vedic. When the Chaldeans had no such concept of plurality of water-deities (Āpodevi) the fact that the plural word in Vedic Literature was borrowed and

used intact by the Chaldeans to indicate one deity itself, proves that it is the Chaldeans who have borrowed. The Chaldeans do not assign primary importance to the God fire nor do they have any such concept as the basic principle from which arose 'ṛta' and 'satya' being full of lustre and such principle becoming less lustrous simultaneously with the rise of distinction between 'ṛta' and 'satya', and giving rise to a dark night in the form of 'arpava'. They do not attach such importance to the power of speech as the Vedic people did. Such being the case of the word 'apsu', it is obvious that Chaldean religion and culture developed, long after they had borrowed bits from Vedic people or after seceding from them. Merely the fact that a word cannot be adequately etymologically explained does not make it foreign. Similarly words like 'guna', 'gana', 'aree', 'ara', 'gama', 'asta', 'guda', 'pada', 'mula', 'mola', 'nara' and 'gura' professing to be Summerian\* must originally have been Vedic, because the Vedic people entertaining the notion of the power of speech were also acquainted with the science or technique of that power.

In the verse (X, 71-1) the two types of language namely, self-emanated and conventional, which I have elucidated in my earlier Marathi work, "The Reorganisation of Vedic culture" are already clarified. Since Sāyanāchārya had no need to delve into this science his commentary naturally became superficial but the words 'Nāmadheyam', 'Dadhānāḥ' are highly suggestive. It

\* Derivations of some of these are very clear. नरि and जर are the derivations of Samskr̥t root न् to move. दम् in the R̥igveda means house. The equal sharers of it are called देपति. In the Chaldean language पटि dropped away and दम् alone denoted husband and wife. अस्तम् means a house. The root is अस् to throw, hence a place where all sorts of things are brought in. मिर् to perish and मूल् a constellation; the root is मू् to die—a constellation rises for some time and disappears. नर् and गुर् also contain न्.

is said there, in clear terms, that people speak two sorts of languages : one is human and open and the other esoteric. This whole hymn needs to be elaborately explained from the point of view of Mantra Sāstra but it will not be in keeping with the limits of this book to do so. The only important point to note is that the Vedic people did not merely sentimentally consecrate a deity in the form of popular speech, but they were intensely proud of their language as well as their uttering of that speech. They were really friendly with people who carefully measured their words like winnowing the oats. They treated makers of impure speech as ignorant and sinful. This is responsible for the later taboo, that a Brāhmaṇa must not speak like a 'Mlenchchh', found in later Brāhmaṇa works. Those who insisted so much on pure language, believed that they had their language earned from sacrifice would never allow foreign words in their speech.

The verse य सद्गय य लक्ष्मि etc. ( VIII, 19 ) is most important. Even today we make an offering unto fire by a process almost similar. The following verse embodies the results of making such offerings, namely, that success is won, land obtained, and calamities warded off. Sāyanāchārya's interpretation of the verse seems to be correct, for it is perfectly in keeping with the Vedic concept that all individual souls, whether on this earth or the transcendental places are mutually connected and interdependent. This means, in other words, that both have to suffer the consequences of each other's doings, good, bad or indifferent. Even deities are not exempt from this law. The same idea is repeated in two more places in the Rgveda. In Vaśistha's famous hymn ( VII, 35 ) the words य त् चुक्षां चुक्षानि ! have been used. In still another place it has clearly been said, "Let not the sins of others be visited on us". Among other peoples such an idea was confined at the most to the family. The term 'Vedena' in this verse raises a controversy as regards interpretation. It bears two meanings namely "with a proper utterance of the Vedas"

or "with the background of proper knowledge." But whichever meaning is taken, the upshot is the same and it is doubtless important. The latter interpretation makes it clear that offering sacrificial fuel and oblations to fire was by itself not very significant but was known to be a mere technique and that this ritualistic act was to be performed with proper knowledge. This also brings into bold relief the notion that there was a science of these techniques which would yield the proper results only when practised according to the dictates of that science, or else even the deeds performed would not result in merit which could be accredited to the doer. It has already been said that rituals and such other things are consistently developed out of a philosophy and cosmology which were mutually consonant and had reached the highest scientific level, this is borne out by this verse. Even if the term 'Vedena' is taken in the former sense, namely, with a proper utterance of the Vedas we come to the same conclusion and incidentally the controversy, whether the Rgvedic hymns were first composed as prayer-songs or mantras is automatically disposed of. In the Rgveda the words 'Uktha' and 'Sāma' independently occur. 'Nivīdam' is also independently mentioned. An ordinary poem is termed 'gāthā' (it is worth remembering that the word 'gāthā' nowhere occurs in the Rgveda in the sense of a mantra or a hymn. These gāthās are raised to a higher status in the Avesta, which is indicative of its age) And as for the Rchās it is clearly stated that all deities reside in them and that persons ignorant of the secret of their abode have no use for them (I,164-39). The same subject is repeated in the 71st hymn of the 10th Mandala as pointed out above. It is, therefore, obvious that this is no mystery but an unmistakable proposition. It is, therefore, but proper that 'Vāk' (the power of speech) was deemed to be an independent deity.

It is but natural that in this extensive cosmos wherein there exist all entities from the highest to the

lowest, literally from Brahma to a blade of grass, there are bound to be different grades and categories of existence with varying powers, and degrees of goodness. But when the modern Western scholar, having one set form of chronological order fixed in his brain, is confronted with this, 'God's plenty' – to borrow a phrase used by Dryden about Chaucer – in the Rgveda he is hopelessly confused and is even in a greater plight than his earlier compeer the 'Mimāmsaka' exerting to reconcile the divergent Vedic texts. But the Mimāmsakas who have evolved a system of exegesis which they have firmly stuck to, have at least got a foothold. But when one thinks of the miracle of the wild guesses of these researchers who may be likened unto a round-bottomed utensil in a state of unstable equilibrium, one is only reminded of an ill-assorted museum! Just as the Rgveda contains different deities it also gives an account of various spirits (Piśachcha), Rāksasa, Gandharva, Upsarā, Khargala, assuming the form of birds, and Sasadani, consuming corpses, and known in later literature as a demoness, 'Satvi'. It also contains groups of important deities like Indra, Varuna, and Brhaspati. In the fourth Mandala the sacrificed animal is enjoined to proceed on the undying path to the groups of deities, and it is also stated that it thus joined that group. Just as, highly cherished lokas (worlds) like 'swarga' are mentioned, neither worlds of suffering like 'Nirṛti' and 'pātāla' are also alluded to. The notion that doers of evil deeds have to sojourn there and suffer intense pain is also mentioned. It is said (IV, 5-5) that this hell was brought about by licentious women and sinful persons. A minute description of the notions of merit and sin is not to be found in the Rgveda but the etymology of the words gives a fair idea. The word 'pāpa' for sin is sometimes derived from the root 'pat' to fall but this does not appear to be convincing. 'Pāpa' is really derived from a repetition of 'apa' meaning away. Whatever takes